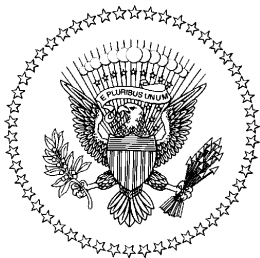


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 13, 1998

**Remarks at the White House
Millennium Lecture With Stephen
Hawking**

March 6, 1998

The President. Thank you very much. And Dr. Hawking, you'll have to forgive me, I'm a little hoarse. I hope for some genetic improvement sometime in the next year or so. *[Laughter]*

Ladies and gentlemen, this was a stunning event for me and, I hope, for all of you. Yesterday Stephen and Elaine came by the White House to see Hillary and me and, as you can imagine, like Hillary, I had reread "A Brief History of Time," and I was utterly terrified—*[laughter]*—that he would say something like, you know, "I went to University College Oxford, too," and then he would ask me some incredible comparative academic question about our experiences there. Instead, he said, "Was the food just as bad when you were there?"—*[laughter]*—which was a wonderful relief. *[Laughter]*

Albert Einstein once said, because politics is for the present, but an equation is something for eternity, equations were more important than politics. I don't know about the politics part, but Professor Hawking's insights into equations have altered our notions of time and the very nature of eternity itself. Tonight he's given us a lot to think about, even the ability to imagine a future in which we as humans will have finally captured the "Holy Grail of physics," reconciling the infinitesimal with the infinite, presenting the world with the ultimate theory of everything. Now, when a physicist does that, he can totally ignore politics and buy a newspaper. *[Laughter]*

The one thing I liked most about thinking about the future in Professor Hawking's term is that even when we reach the era of "Star Trek," which will make a lot of our children very happy, it won't be so static. It will still be human and dynamic. And according to

the visuals accompanying the lecture, it will still matter whether you can bluff at poker, which is encouraging. *[Laughter]*

I want to get on with the questions now. And again, I want to thank Professor Hawking for the extraordinary clarity and vigor of his presentation and for sharing his time with us tonight, and for placing this particular moment in the larger spectrum of time—which I think if we all could do more and more clearly every day, we would live happier, more productive lives.

Thank you, Professor.

Ellen, would you like to take over and bring in the questions?

[At this point, the question-and-answer part of the lecture proceeded.]

The President. Dr. Hawking, our position is we have repealed that law. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, first of all, in defense of my Vice President, you will all understand that he would love to be here, but there is a peculiar gravitational force in New Hampshire that manifests itself with a remarkable regularity. *[Laughter]* Let me also say that in the visual presentation accompanying Dr. Hawking's lecture, there was that remarkable project stamped "canceled" on it. This administration opposed the cancellation of it, I'm proud to say. *[Laughter]* But we hope that the Swiss project will take up the slack.

There's so many questions I know you would all like to ask. We have hundreds of questions coming in, and one of the questions I wish there were time to explore is, if we do, in fact, acquire a general understanding that time and space are more multi-dimensional than we had imagined, and computers become ever more sophisticated, even if people will never be able to travel at the speed of light, will we be able to communicate some day in some ways that destroy our common notions of time?

I've thought about it a lot, and I'm not smart enough to know what the answer is,

but I'd love to—that's one of the reasons I enjoyed re-reading the book.

Let me also say one other thing to close—since our Nobel laureate talked about his faith about how the world began—the First Lady started tonight by talking about the marvels of technology which enable this astonishing man to communicate with us. And it is true that he is here, and we did this because of the marvels of technology. It is also true, in my mind, that he is a genuine living miracle because of the power of the heart and the spirit. And we can only hope that all the advances that he has foreseen for us tonight in human knowledge will serve to amplify the heart and the spirit that we have humbly witnessed this evening.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:17 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Elaine Hawking, wife of Stephen W. Hawking, Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, who gave the second lecture in the Millennium series; Ellen Lovell, Director, White House Millennium Council; and William D. Phillips, 1997 Nobel laureate in physics. The President also referred to the canceled superconducting super collider project. Professor Hawking, who suffers from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, spoke with the aid of a computerized voice synthesizer. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

March 7, 1998

Good morning. Since I took office I've done everything in my power to protect our children from harm. We've worked to make their streets and their schools safer, to give them something positive to do after school and before their parents get home. We've worked to teach our children that drugs are dangerous, illegal, and wrong. This week we took a major step to protect our children, indeed all Americans, from the dangers of drunk driving by proposing bipartisan legislation to lower the legal limit to .08 in every State.

Today I want to talk to you about the historic opportunity we now have to protect our Nation's children from an even more deadly

threat: smoking. Smoking kills more people every day than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, suicides, drugs, and fires combined. Nearly 90 percent of those smokers lit their first cigarette before they turned 18.

Today, the epidemic of teen smoking is raging throughout our Nation as, one by one, our children are lured by multimillion dollar marketing schemes designed to do exactly that. Consider this: 3,000 children start to smoke every day illegally, and 1,000 of them will die sooner because of it. This is a national tragedy that every American should be honor-bound to help prevent.

For more than 5 years we've worked to stop our children from smoking before they start, launching a nationwide campaign with the FDA to educate them about the dangers of smoking, to reduce their access to tobacco products, and to severely restrict tobacco companies from advertising to young people. But even this is not enough to fully protect our children.

To put an end to the epidemic, Congress must act. Last fall I called on Congress to put aside politics and pass comprehensive bipartisan legislation to reduce teen smoking by raising the price of cigarettes by up to a dollar and a half a pack over the next 10 years, imposing strong penalties if the tobacco industry keeps selling cigarettes to our children, affirming the FDA's full authority to regulate tobacco, to prevent children's access to tobacco products, and to restrict tobacco ads aimed at young people, so that our children can't fall prey to the deadly threat of tobacco. Now, we learned last month that if we do this, we'll cut teen smoking by almost half over the next 5 years. That means if we act now, we have it in our power to stop 3 million children from smoking and to save a million lives as a result.

Today there are as few as 70 working days left before this Congress adjourns. On every one of those days, 1,000 adults will die from smoking. On every one of those days, 3,000 children will light their first cigarettes. On every one of those days, this Congress has the opportunity to stop it.

Will this Congress be remembered for putting politics aside and protecting our children from tobacco or for letting the public health opportunity of a lifetime pass us by?

There will be no greater measure of your commitment to the health of our children or the future of our Nation.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of James B. McDougal

March 8, 1998

I am saddened to learn about Jim McDougal's death today. I have good memories of the years we worked together in Arkansas, and I extend my condolences to his family.

Remarks to the American Medical Association National Leadership Conference

March 9, 1998

Thank you very much for that warm welcome. And thank you, Dr. Wootton. He was giving his talk, and I was listening, and I was thinking: I agree with all that; there's nothing left for me to say. If I knew a couple of funny stories, I could just tell them and leave and thank you for the opportunity. *[Laughter]*

Dr. Dickey, congratulations on being the president-elect. Dr. Reardon, thank you for serving on the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality. Dr. Smoak, thank you for telling me there's nothing incompatible between a doctor named "Smoke" and a campaign against tobacco. *[Laughter]* Dr. Jensen, ladies and gentlemen.

I am honored to be here and to be working with the AMA on so many important fronts. We have, in the past, sometimes had honest differences on policy but have always agreed on our profound obligation to the health of our Nation's families. We're walking together in a step-by-step approach to health care reform, expanding the promise of new medical technologies, extending health care opportunities to the most vulnerable Americans.

Together we've helped Americans to keep their health coverage when they change jobs or someone in their families gets sick. And in last year's balanced budget agreement we

helped to make sure that up to 5 million uninsured children will get the medical coverage they deserve and the help they need, with the biggest increase in health coverage for children since 1965.

We have worked to increase medical research and to support greater efforts at preservation and care for conditions from breast cancer to diabetes. Last year, in our balanced budget plan, the diabetes component was said by the American Diabetes Association to be the most important advance in the treatment and care of diabetes since the discovery of insulin.

We found the right family doctor for America, Dr. David Satcher, our new Surgeon General. Last month your voices were strong and united in support of his nomination, and I thank you, and America's families thank you. The lesson of these endeavors is that when we work together, we can get things done.

This is a very great moment for America on the edge of a new century, a new millennium, and a completely new economy and new global society. We see dramatic changes in the way our people work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world. Our economy is the strongest it's been in a generation. In 5 years, we have 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership rate in the history of the country. Our social problems are on the mend. Crime is at its lowest rate in 24 years. The welfare rolls are the lowest in 27 years. Teen pregnancy and out-of-wedlock births are declining. Our leadership is unrivaled around the world as we work for peace and freedom and security.

Still, as I said in the State of the Union Address, these good times do not give us the opportunity to rest or withdraw. Instead, if we are wise, we will use this as a time to act and to build, to secure our prosperity and strengthen our future, first of all, by not spending this budget surplus we waited 30 years for before it exists and putting Social Security first, saving Social Security for the 21st century so that the baby boom generation does not either bankrupt Social Security

or bankrupt their children and their retirement. That's what we should do before we spend that surplus.

This is a time to widen the circle of opportunity. That's what we're doing with adding 5 million children to the health care rolls. In spite of the fact that we have a 4.6 percent unemployment rate, there's still neighborhoods, mostly in urban America, sometimes in rural America, where the recovery has not yet been felt. And our greatest opportunity to continue to grow the economy with low inflation is to bring the miracles of free enterprise and high technology into these neighborhoods that have not yet felt them.

We also have to look at our long-term challenges. And I'll just mention two or three that go beyond health care but will affect you, your children, and your grandchildren. First, as the recent International Math and Science Test results for seniors showed, we may have the best system of college education in the world, and we have now opened the doors of college to everyone with tax credits and scholarships and work-study provisions and community service provisions, but no one seriously believes we have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world. And we must keep working to raise standards and increase accountability and increase performance until we do have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world.

Second, we have to recognize that what you do for a living, worry about people's health, is going to increasingly be affected by global development. Global travel patterns have given us something called "airport malaria" now, a phenomenon no one ever knew about. And we have to recognize furthermore that a lot of what we deal with in health care will be affected by the overall condition of the environment. That's why the issue of global climate change is so important. We have malaria now at higher altitudes than ever before recorded because of climate change. A lot of you are probably noticing as you hear from me that your allergies are a little worse in the springtime with El Niño, even in Washington, when you don't think it could ever be any worse than it is normally. So we have to deal with the climate change issue.

We have to deal with the problems of weapons of mass destruction. Even as we reduce the nuclear threat, we see on the horizon the prospect that small-scale nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons in the hands of terrorists, drug traffickers, organized criminals, rogue states, could change the whole future of security for our children. We have to cooperate more with other countries for peace and prosperity around the world.

In a few days, I'm going to Africa, and I will be the first sitting American President ever to visit the nations in Africa where I'm going to visit. But they're a big part of our future, economically, politically, and in terms of our shared concerns over health and environmental matters.

Now, I'd like you to see the particular issues I want to discuss today in this larger context. Are we doing what we should be doing to prepare this country for a new century, to widen the circle of opportunity, to strengthen the bonds that unite us together, to reenforce our values, to make our freedom mean more in the future? All of these issues should be seen against that background.

This is a moment of great promise, but it's also a moment of great obligation. Every American decisionmaker, including all the Members of the Congress, but all the rest of us as well, must decide whether we believe that. Because when times are good, the easiest thing to do is to relax, enjoy it, express relief.

If anybody told me the day I took office as President that in 5 years the stock market would go from 3200 to 8500 and we'd have 15 million new jobs and almost two-thirds of the American people would be in their own homes, and all the other things, I would have said, "maybe, but probably not." Having achieved that, and having stepped on all the hot coals that were necessary to get from where we were then to where we are now, it is easy for people to say, "Well, let's relax." That would be a terrible mistake. That's the number one message I have today. We have to move. Prosperity and confidence give us the freedom of movement that we have to seize. We have to move. This is not a time to sit still. It's a time to bear down and go forward, and we need your help.

Now, there are fewer than 70—70—working days left in Washington before Congress adjourns. Now, this is an election year, and the work schedule is always somewhat shorter in an election year, and that's understandable. But it's unusually limited this year. How will the 105th Congress go down in history? I want it to go down in history as a Congress that saved lives by passing the Patient's Bill of Rights, by passing tough and sweeping tobacco legislation, by passing the Research Fund for the 21st Century with its big increase in medical research, and extending health care coverage to those who presently are uninsured. That's what I want this Congress to go down with.

The next 70 days will tell the tale. Will this Congress go down in history as one that passed landmark legislation to save lives and strengthen America for the new century, or one that was dominated by partisan election year politics?

The calendar tells us that this is an election year. That's a good thing; we need one every now and then. *[Laughter]* Have the debates and have the discussion. But as I have told every Member of Congress in both parties with whom I have discussed this, no matter how much we get done this year there will still be things at the end of the year on which honorable people in both parties disagree, more than enough over which to have an honest, fruitful, meaty election. This election should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the American people want it to be not only an election year but a productive legislative year for the health and welfare of our country and our future.

Dr. Wootton has already talked about the Patient's Bill of Rights, but I want to say a few things about it. Because my mother was a nurse anesthetist, I grew up around doctors from the time I was a little boy. They were the first professional people that I ever knew. Most of them were the kind of people we'd all like our children to grow up to be. They were hard-working, able, kind, caring people. Most doctors today are as well. But the world of medical practice is very different today than it was 40 years ago, when I first started looking at it though the eyes of a child—not altogether worse, of course. There are many things that are better. We have higher

life expectancy, the lowest infant mortality rate we've ever recorded, the highest rate of childhood immunization, dramatic advances in medicines and medical technologies and all kinds of treatments.

We also have more than 160 million Americans in managed care plans. And while there have been some problems with them, all of us have to be glad when health care costs don't go up at 4 or 5 times the rate of inflation.

Still, it's often harder for you just to be doctors. When a doctor spends almost as much time with a bookkeeper as with a patient, something is wrong. If you have to spend more time filling out forms than making rounds, something is wrong. And most important to me, when medical decisions are made by someone other than a doctor and something other than the best interests of the patient is the bottom line, then something is wrong. I think we should have a simple standard: traditional care or managed care, every American deserves quality care.

We all have our stories, and yours are more firsthand and perhaps fresher than mine, but I never will forget reading a few weeks ago about a woman who worked in an oncologist's office to verify insurance coverage and get authorizations for medical procedures, who told us the story of a 12-year-old boy with a cancerous tumor in his leg. The doctor wanted to perform a procedure to save the boy's leg, but the health plan said no. It seems that for that condition, the only approved procedure was amputation. And that was the only procedure the plan would pay for. The child's parents appealed the decision, but they were turned down. They appealed again and were turned down again. Only when the father's employer weighed in did the health plan change its mind. By then, it was too late, the boy's cancer had spread, and amputation was the only choice left. Of course, it was covered by the health plan.

That is a choice no family should have to make. If the doctor had been able to do the right thing, the child would have been better off, and the system would have been better served.

We have the best trained, best skilled doctors in the world, the best medical education,

the best medical technology. We're all getting a lot smarter than we used to be about prevention. The first thing your president said to me is, "I'm a cardiologist. Take this golf club, and stay in good shape." [Laughter] We're getting better at it. But it is madness to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. And it happens, over and over and over again.

There are no fewer than 500 stories that could come up in this audience right now within a half an hour not all that different from the one I just told. That is what we seek to address. That's what the Patient's Bill of Rights is all about, to put medical decisions back into the hands of doctors and their patients. I have already acted, as your president said, to ensure that Federal employees and their families, military personnel, veterans and their families, everyone on Medicare and Medicaid, altogether about a third of our people, are covered by the Patient's Bill of Rights.

And across our Nation, State legislators and Governors, both Republican and Democratic, are doing what they can. Forty-three States have enacted into law one or more of the basic provisions of the Patient's Bill of Rights. But State laws and the patchwork of reforms can't protect most Americans. At least 140 million of them are without basic protection. That's why we need the Federal Patient's Bill of Rights with the full force of Federal law.

The Hippocratic oath binds doctors, and I quote, "to follow that method of treatment which according to my ability and judgment I consider for the benefit of my patient." That is your responsibility, and should be your patient's right: to know all the medical options, not just the cheapest; primary care when possible, specialists when necessary. That's why the Patient's Bill of Rights lifts the gag order on our Nation's doctors and allows patients to follow your best recommendations by appealing unfair decisions by managed care accountants.

Patients also should have a right to keep their medical records confidential. Doctors must feel free to write down the whole truth without it ending up on the Internet or in the hands of employers and marketing firms or increasing a patient's insurance rates.

Again, the Hippocratic oath says, "all such shall be kept secret." That's why the Patient's Bill of Rights safeguards the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship. Patients have a right to emergency services wherever and whenever they need it. And when the EMT's are wheeling a new arrival into the emergency room, the last thing you or the patient should have to worry about is the fine print on the health plan.

Again I say, there are less than 70 days remaining in this legislative session, but there is broad bipartisan support in this Congress for this legislation. We have acted in our administration; states have acted; the AMA has acted. You must impress upon the Congress the urgency of passing this legislation. Believe me, a majority of the Congress, a huge majority in both Houses and Members of both parties, are for this. It is just a question of mustering the will to get the job done and going through some of the very difficult issues around the edges that have to be resolved. But there is utterly no reason not to do this this year. You can get it done if you work at it.

The other great issue before the Congress in health care is, of course, tobacco. Now, you're right, Dr. Wootton, I did read "The Journal of the American Medical Association" special edition on tobacco. I read it all from start to finish. And it was a great service to me and to the American people, and I thank you very much for it.

Again, you can argue about some of the fine print, but the big picture is clear: Every single day, even though it is illegal in every State in America, 3,000 kids start to smoke; 1,000 of them will die earlier because of it. This amounts to a national epidemic and a national tragedy. You know as well as I do that more people die from smoking-related illnesses every year than from most other things that cause death in America put together. As physicians, you also know that in the end, the only way that we have to deal with this today with absolute conviction is with preventive care: Don't do it in the first place.

Now, for more than 5 years, we have worked to stop our children from smoking before they start. We launched a nationwide campaign with the FDA to educate children

about the dangers of smoking, to reduce access of children to tobacco products, to put a stop to tobacco companies that spend millions mass-marketing to our young people.

Last fall I asked the Congress to pass comprehensive, bipartisan legislation to reduce teen smoking by raising the price of cigarettes up to a dollar and a half a pack over the next several years, imposing strong penalties on tobacco companies that keep on advertising to children, and giving the FDA full authority to regulate children's access to tobacco products.

If we do this, we can cut teen smoking by almost half in 5 years. We can stop almost 3 million children from taking that first drag. We can prevent almost one million premature deaths. But again, the clock is ticking.

And yes, there are lots of complicated issues. You know, because this is a five- or six-part package, there are several committees and subcommittees involved. And because there is some controversy around the edges about how much money should be raised how quickly from the tobacco tax and what it should be spent on, there are some difficult issues to be resolved. And yes, I know that there are only 70 days. But if we know that the lives of 1,000 children a day are at stake, how can we walk away from this legislative session without a solution to the tobacco issue?

There are two other issues I'd like to mention to you. The first relates to Medicare. This week—or, excuse me—last week, I attended the first meeting of the Bipartisan Medicare Commission appointed by the leaders of the House and the Senate and the White House to look for long-term reform for Medicare for the 21st century. As you know, we have secured the Medicare Trust Fund for another decade with some very difficult decisions. But there are a lot of unresolved issues out there, and in some ways the complexity of the Medicare problem is greater than the complexity of the Social Security problem. At least it has to be dealt with sooner in time. So I want to urge your support for the Medicare Commission and your involvement in it.

I also have made a specific proposal with regard to Medicare that I believe should be passed this year without regard to the work

of the Medicare Commission, and I ask you to carefully review it, and I hope you'll support it. It would give a vulnerable group of Americans, displaced workers 55 and over—people who either voluntarily take early retirement, and they're promised health care, but the promise is broken, or people who are laid off, and they can't find another job, and they lose their job-related health insurance—and other seniors, principally people who are married to folks who lose their old health insurance because they start being covered by Medicare, but they're not old enough to be on Medicare so they lose the family coverage, and they don't have anything—it would take this group of Americans and give them the chance to buy into Medicare at cost.

The Congressional Budget Office just reported that the policy will cost even less and will benefit even more people than we in our administration had estimated, and agreed with us that it will have no burden whatever on the Medicare Trust Fund. It will not shorten the life of the Trust Fund, nor will it complicate in any way our attempts at the long-term reform of Medicare. We're talking about somewhere between three and four hundred thousand people that are just out there, that had health insurance and now don't have any—at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives. So I hope you will support that.

The second thing I'd like to ask for your support for involves a project that Hillary has worked very hard on to sort of leave some gifts for our country in the new millennium. The project motto is "Honoring our past and imagining our future." Among other things, we're working with the Congress to get the funds necessary to save, for example, the Star-Spangled Banner, which is in terrible shape. We need to spend, believe it or not, \$13 million to restore the flag and to make sure that the 200 years of lighting don't destroy the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and to try to get every community in the country to find those things in each community which are most important to their history and save them.

But we're also looking at the future. And perhaps the most important thing about the

future-oriented nature of this project is the Research Fund for the 21st Century, which has a huge increase in research for all forms of scientific research and development but especially have the largest increase in funding for the NIH in history and doubling the funding for the National Cancer Institute.

We are on the verge of unlocking a number of medical mysteries, as you know. Last year, for example, we had the first sign of movement in the lower limbs of laboratory animals with severed spines. The human genome project is proceeding at a rapid pace, with implications which still stagger the imagination. Again I say, we have the money to do this. We can do this within the balanced budget. And while there may not be time to resolve every issue I'd like to see resolved in this Congress, we should nail down now this Research Fund for the 21st Century. There has been terrific support, in the Republican as well as in the Democratic caucuses. This has not been a partisan issue. It is just the question of getting the job done in the next 70 days.

So while you're here, let me say again, a big part of building America for the 21st century is building a healthier America and building an America where people feel secure with the health care they have, and they feel it has integrity. We need the Patient's Bill of Rights. We need action on the tobacco front. We need reform of Medicare long term. We need to help these people that are falling between the gaps because they're not old enough yet. And we need to continue in an intensified way our commitment to research. Let us take the benefit of our prosperity and finally having a balanced budget and invest the kind of money in research that we know—we know—will ensure benefits beyond our wildest imagination.

We can do all this in the next 70 days, but to do it we'll have to do it together. I need your help. Your patients need you help. Your country will be richly rewarded if you can persuade the Congress to act in these areas.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the ballroom at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Percy Wootton, president, Dr. Nancy Dickey, president-elect, Dr.

Thomas Reardon, chairman of the board, Dr. Randolph Smoak, vice chairman of the board, and Dr. Lynn E. Jensen, chief executive officer and interim vice president, American Medical Association.

Remarks at Housatonic Community-Technical College in Bridgeport, Connecticut

March 10, 1998

Thank you very much. First of all, I think Pamela did a terrific job with her speech. And secondly, when Anthony stood up, I thought to myself, in a few years Congressman Shays will be retiring, and I—[*laughter*—may be looking at his successor right there. He was great. [*Laughter*] I love it. Senator Dodd, you might want to hire him as a consultant this year. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Mayor, I'm delighted to be back in Bridgeport with you and Jennifer and the officials of the city government. I thank Senator Dodd and Congressman Shays and Representatives Barbara Kennelly and Rose DeLauro for joining us today; Attorney General Blumenthal, Treasurer Paul Sylvester, Speaker Ritter and members of the legislature.

Like Senator Dodd, I want to extend my condolences on behalf of Hillary and myself to the families of the victims of the shooting incident in Newington, and our prayers are with them.

And like Senator Dodd, on a happier note, I want to congratulate Connecticut for getting both its teams into the NCAA. [*Laughter*] So did Arkansas. [*Laughter*] Thank goodness we don't have a contest anytime soon. And what Senator Dodd didn't say is that UCONN's men's team is actually playing in Washington this week. And so I think you all should keep score and see which Members of your congressional delegation show up to root the home team on. [*Laughter*]

I'm glad to be back in Bridgeport. I really like this community, and I have admired the courage with which the people here have struggled in the tough years and moved to move the community forward. I should tell you, whenever I come to a place you all notice that there are a few members of the press who come with me. [*Laughter*] And

sometimes it seems that we're on opposite sides of the line, but you should know that one member of the press, Larry McQuillan, who works for Reuters New Service, and is actually the president of the White House Press Corps this year, is from Bridgeport. He will write a totally biased, favorable story—[laughter]—about this wonderful college and child care program today, I can assure you.

I want to thank President Wertz for showing me around the school and the unbelievable art collection here, which you should be very proud of. And I want to thank Marie Nulty for taking me through the wonderful preschool program.

In the "Early Childhood Lab Schools Parent Handbook" there is the following quote: "A child is like a butterfly in the wind. Some can fly higher than others, but each one flies the best it can. Each one is special. Each one is different. Each one is beautiful." After going through this child care center, it seems to me that that is a motto that every teacher I saw lived and worked by, and that every child I met was made to feel special every day.

The reason I came here today is twofold: First of all, because of the extraordinary leadership for children and especially on the child care center issue—child care issue, of Senator Dodd, along with the Members of your House delegation who are here, who have been terrific on this issue; and second, because what I see here today is what I believe every child in America needs, and it's important that we graphically demonstrate to the country that with so many parents in the work force are going back to school, there is a crying unmet need which the mayor graphically and numerically demonstrated in his remarks just here in Bridgeport, all over the country for the kind of high quality child care that you offer here.

Today we have to make a commitment to extend that option to every family in America that needs it. I want to talk about what we in the Federal Government can do on our own to improve child care at Federal centers, but most importantly, I want to talk about what Congress should do in the next 70 days to help every working family give their children the kind of child care we see here.

As has been said already, these are good times for America. We have 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership rate in history, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years. And I'm proud of it. These numbers only matter insofar as they reflect differences in the lives of ordinary Americans—a different life story that can be told. The reason I was proud to be introduced by Pamela Price is that she embodies the changing story of America over the last 5 years, and that's what we want for every American who's willing to work for it.

In last year's historic balanced budget agreement we provided a child care tax credit of \$500 per child for families; expanded health care coverage to 5 million more children in lower income working families who don't have access to it now; and perhaps most important, have virtually opened the doors of college to all Americans. For example—and you can compare it, what it means here at Housatonic—in the last years we have added 300,000 work-study slots, hundreds of thousands of more scholarships; we've made the interest on student loans tax deductible; 100,000 young people have worked their way through college or earned money for college by serving in AmeriCorps in community service projects. You can now save for a college education in an IRA and withdraw from the IRA tax free if the money is used for a college education. But most important, now there is a \$1,500 tax credit—that's not a deduction, a credit—a reduction of your tax bill for the first 2 years of college, and a lifetime learning credit that is substantial, but not quite that large for junior and senior years, for job training programs, for graduate schools. I think we can really say that insofar as community-based institutions like this are concerned, we have opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it. And that is a profoundly important achievement for our country.

Senator Dodd talked about what the Family and Medical Leave Act means. The American dream is now in reach for more and more families. And that is a very, very good thing. But as you heard Pamela say, what

made all this work for her as she was struggling to put her life on track was knowing that her child would be in a safe, healthy, positive child care environment. And if we really want to open the doors of opportunity to all Americans, we not only have to finish our agenda of bringing job opportunities and business opportunities into every neighborhood and every city like Bridgeport in America, we have to make sure that if the jobs and the educational opportunities are open, the parents can actually go without having to worry that they're neglecting their children.

We can never have a country that is fully successful if millions of people every day get up and look forward to a day in which they are terrified that they will have to make a choice between being a responsible parent and a good worker or a good student. If we have to choose, we lose. Society has no more important work than raising children. If everyone did that successfully, I think we would all agree we'd have less than half the problems we have today.

On the other hand, this economic boom we celebrate was fueled by having nearly two-thirds of the American adults in the work force, the highest percentage of people in the work force in history. That's how you get a low unemployment rate. Well, by definition, a lot of those folks are parents with children who have to be supervised and nourished and supported and helped.

So when you think about this child care issue, if you look at it the way I do, not just as President, but as a parent and as someone who's worked all his life, I say to myself, we cannot have a country that asks people to make a choice between succeeding at home and succeeding at work, and insofar as we have to choose, we lose. When we know we can succeed at home and at work because of an effective child care center, every American wins. The country wins. We're stronger in the 21st century; our families are stronger; our economies are stronger; they reinforce each other. That's really what this child care issue is all about.

Now, we've worked hard on this for the last 5 years. We've helped a million more parents to pay—or the parents of a million more children to pay for child care. But obvi-

ously—remember the mayor's numbers for Bridgeport—there is a huge amount of work to be done here. And today we're releasing a report that confirms the overwhelming need still existing all across America. The report shows that States have come up with a lot of innovative ideas, and the Congress allocated \$4 billion more to States for child care as a part of welfare reform. But even with all that, it is clear that the resources are simply not there yet to meet the needs of all the families in America. States have been forced to turn away literally thousands upon thousands of low-income families.

In Connecticut, the State Child Care Bureau has to restrict its aid to families on welfare or teen parents in high school. They've actually stopped taking applications from families that are so-called “working poor” altogether.

So here we are at a time of unprecedented prosperity, when people at the lower end of the income scale are finally beginning to get pay raises and have some security in their jobs, but we know they can't afford quality child care without help. So here we are at a time, the best of times for our country, and yet we still have millions of people getting up every day going to work worrying about their children. We are forcing them to make choices that no family should have to make, that no country should tolerate, and that we will pay for down the road sooner or later. So what we want to do is pay for it now, the right way and have a good, positive environment.

Now, let me say some of the things that I intend to do with the Federal child care centers. We care, the Federal Government cares in its child care centers for some 215,000 children—quite a few. We want them to be a model for the Nation. Today I'm going to direct my Cabinet to do four things:

First, to make all the centers fully accredited by the year 2000. Now, what does that mean, in terms of quality of facilities, training for workers and child-to-staff ratios? Today, believe it or not, 76 percent of our military child care centers are already accredited, but only 35 percent of our non-military centers are. We'll make both categories 100 percent in the next 700 days.

Second, we have to make sure that all the centers conduct thorough background checks on workers. In too many States there is no checking to see if the people we trust with our children are even trustworthy in the eyes of the law. Connecticut is one of the few States that actually does require a criminal background check of child care workers. Every State should do it, and the Federal Government should certainly do it.

Third, we have to make sure that all Federal workers know about all their child care benefits and options in the first place.

And finally, we're going to do more work with the private sector to make Federal child care better and more affordable. If we do all that, there will still be millions of kids out there and their parents who need help. In the balanced budget I have presented to Congress for this year, I've proposed a comprehensive and responsible plan to strengthen child care. There will be other proposals to do the same thing.

Now, Congress is only going to meet about 70 more days this year. I know you say, "Well, it's only March," but anyway that's—in Washington, Congress plans to only sit about 70 more days. Now, there is enormous support, I believe, among people in both parties in our country and, I believe, among people in both parties in the Congress for taking action on child care. I have a plan, and there are others which would double the number of children receiving child care subsidies, at a million or more new kids, give tax cuts to businesses which provide child care, expand child care tax credits to 3 million working families, and improve the standards of child care centers and provide more funds to train—adequately train—workers in child care centers.

Now, we're not talking about peanuts here. Let me tell you what we're talking about. The tax credits that we will offer, if Congress would pass them, would mean that a family of four living on up to \$35,000 a year that has high child care bills would not pay any Federal income tax. That would be a terrific incentive to help working families afford quality child care. And for lower income working families who don't owe any Federal income tax anyway, if we increase the block grant going to the States, it goes to subsidized

care for lower income working families, plus the money that we have given the States for people moving from welfare to work—we will be able to make a huge dent in this problem.

If Congress acts, we can make child care safer as well as more affordable. We can even give scholarships under our plan to talented caregivers to train more people. We also can expand after school programs to keep 500,000 more kids, when they get a little older, off our streets and out of trouble after school. I think that's very important. As I said, there are only 70 days left. There are always, with something this big, some controversy around the edges of the issue. But all these things can be resolved if the Congress will make up its mind to act. Because these 70 days of meetings where they can vote will be spread over most of the year. There's still time for committee meetings, for staff to do their work, for all that kind of stuff to happen. We can do this. We do not need to wait another year just because this is an election year to pass this. We need to do this now.

The other thing I want to say that's related to this, is that Congress must pass comprehensive tobacco legislation to reduce teen smoking and raise the price of cigarettes by up to a dollar and a half a pack, impose strong penalties on companies that continue to advertise to children, and give the FDA full authority to regulate tobacco products and children's access to them. The revenues we raise from the tobacco company would help to make a partial contribution to the child care plan that I have proposed as well.

Again I say, there's some controversy—there's some issues that have to be resolved in this tobacco settlement, to get the legislation. But I want to, again, graphically illustrate—I just watched all those little kids in that room, those two rooms, these beautiful children—every single day, even though it is illegal in every State in America, 3,000 more children begin to smoke; 1,000 of those 3,000 children will die sooner because of that decision. Hardly anybody becomes a chronic, lifetime smoker who does not start in their teenage years.

So I know there are only 70 days left, and I know this is a big bill. But I know that

there are Democrats and Republicans in substantial numbers who want to do this. We should not let the calendar get in the way of the urgent need for action. We can pass the child care reforms, and we can fund them. And we can pass the tobacco legislation, and we must. Just think about it: 1,000 kids every day that wants—just like all these children did in here. Just think about it, every single day. There is no need to wait. There is no excuse for waiting. The time to act is now.

I leave you with this thought. I'm glad you clapped when I said these are good times for America. And you ought to be proud of yourselves, because the whole country helped to create these good times. And the efforts that we make in different areas, from the economy to crime to welfare reform to early childhood to health and education, they all reinforce each other. But sometimes when times are good and people clap and they feel good, they relax. I tell you, when times are good but challenges are large and the future is coming at you like a fast train down a track—and that's how the 21st century is coming at you, with things changing more rapidly than ever before—then an obligation is imposed to use the good times to act, not to relax.

So I say to all of you, the Members of Congress who are here are ready to act, so give them all a pat on the back, but do everything you can to send a clear and unambiguous signal that you do not want the election year to be a relaxation year; you want it to be a legislating year for the children of this country to make them stronger in the new century. After all, it's only 700 days away. Let's spend 70 days to make sure that in 700 days we'll have the healthiest, strongest children in the history of our Nation.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Performing Arts Building. In his remarks, he referred to Pamela A. Price, a student with a child in the college's child care program, who introduced the President, and her son, Anthony; Mayor Joseph P. Ganim of Bridgeport, and his wife, Jennifer; State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal; State Treasurer Paul Sylvester; Thomas D. Ritter, speaker, State House of Representatives; Janis M. Wertz, president,

Housatonic Community-Technical College; and Marie Nulty, director, Early Childhood Laboratory School. The President also referred to an incident on March 6, 1998, in Newington, CT, in which an employee of the State Lottery Commission entered the commission's headquarters and killed four officials and then turned the gun on himself.

Memorandum on Steps To Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care *March 10, 1998*

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Steps to Improve Federally Sponsored Child Care

Now more than ever, America's working parents are struggling to balance their obligations to be good workers—and their more important obligations to be good parents. By choice or by financial necessity, millions of Americans rely on child care to care for their children for part of each day. Parents deserve to know that their children are safe and nurtured in child care.

One of my highest priorities is to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. That is why my balanced budget includes the most significant investment in child care in our Nation's history and proposes specific measures to improve child care quality.

As a supplier of child care and as an employer that must recruit and retain a strong workforce, the Federal Government should lead the way in improving child care. I am proud that our military has developed one of the finest child care delivery systems in the world, and that the Department of Defense, at my request, is sharing its expertise with the public and private sectors. Still, we need to do more. The executive branch of the Federal Government has responsibility for over 1,000 child care centers—788 through the military, 109 through the General Services Administration, and 127 through other Federal departments. In addition, the military oversees nearly 10,000 professional family child care providers. In total, approximately 215,000 children are in our care.

Today I am directing my Administration to take significant new steps to improve the

quality of Federally sponsored child care in the executive branch by (1) ensuring proper background checks of child care workers; (2) achieving 100 percent independent accreditation of all eligible centers; (3) exploring partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability; and (4) ensuring that all Federal workers become better informed of child care benefits and the options available to them.

First, all child care workers in Federally sponsored centers should undergo thorough background checks to make sure that our children are safe. The vast majority of child care workers are caring people who have dedicated their lives to teaching and nurturing children. But one tragedy in child care is too many, and criminal and civil background checks are necessary to determine whether the people caring for our children are fit for this responsibility. The military already has a model system to conduct background checks of child care workers. I now want to guarantee that workers at all non-military, Federal child care facilities undergo such background checks in a thorough and timely fashion.

I therefore direct the Administrator of General Services ("Administrator") to report to me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure complete and timely background checks, to the fullest extent possible, for all child care workers in nonmilitary, Federally sponsored child care settings. Agencies with oversight of nonmilitary child care settings will report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Second, all Federally sponsored child care centers should receive nationally recognized, independent accreditation as soon as they are eligible to do so. Currently, only 76 percent of military centers, and 35 percent of other Federally sponsored centers, are accredited. By the year 2000, 100 percent should be accredited. I therefore direct the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator to provide me, within 90 days, with a plan to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, independent, nationally recognized accreditation of all eligible, Federally sponsored child care by the year 2000. Agencies with oversight of non-

military child care settings shall report to the Administrator within 60 days on this matter.

Third, partnerships among Federal agencies and with the private sector are an increasingly important way to maximize existing resources and improve child care. I therefore direct the Administrator to work with the heads of all Federal departments and agencies to explore opportunities for collaboration both within Government and with the private sector to improve child care quality and affordability in Federally sponsored settings.

Finally, employers have a responsibility to make sure that their workers are better informed on child care and the options available to them at the national, State, and local levels. I therefore direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management ("Director") to ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, all Federal workers receive full information about child care benefits available to them on the Federal, State, and local levels, including information on resource and referral networks, available tax credits such as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, as well as public subsidies. The Director shall also host a nationwide summit designed to showcase model public and private sector solutions to child care needs.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at a Democratic Business Council Luncheon in Westport, Connecticut

March 10, 1998

Thank you very much. Bob and Yvette and all the others, all of you who are here, I can't thank you enough for coming and for your support. Mayor Farrell, I'm glad to be in Westport. Mayor Ganim, I enjoyed our visit in Bridgeport. Governor Romer and Len Barrack and Fran Katz, thank you for all the work you do for the Democratic Party. And Barbara Kennelly, thank you for having the courage to run for Governor. I want you to win. I'll do what I can to help you, and certainly you deserve it.

I'd also like to say to all of you, I remember that night in 1991 when I came to Westport

the first time. My name recognition was less than 50 percent among the people in the room to meet me that night. *[Laughter]* You know how those things start—I mean, more than half the people showed up because somebody they knew asked them to, and they couldn't think of a convenient excuse to get out of it. *[Laughter]* So I do remember.

When I announced for President I was running fifth in New Hampshire. My mother was the only person I knew who thought I was going to win. *[Laughter]* So it has been a long road since I first came here as a candidate to Westport. I can't imagine why only George Washington and Franklin Roosevelt have been here, however. The others must not have known what they were missing.

I feel a great deal of debt to the people of Connecticut. Connecticut voted for Al Gore and me twice and by a much bigger margin in '96 even than in '92. The people of Connecticut have supported the efforts of the last 5 years, and I believe now support the agenda for the 21st century that I outlined in the State of the Union speech.

I know you've all heard a lot of political speeches, but we're here at a Democratic Party event, so I will give you a very brief one. If you had to go home today when you left here and someone asked you, "why did you go to that lunch," you don't have the excuse that you might have had in December of '91. You knew exactly what you were doing when you showed up. Why did you come here? Why do you belong to our party? Why do you support it?

I have spent a lot of time thinking about my mission as President. I think about it every day. What do I want? I want our country to go into the 21st century with the American dream alive for every person who will work for it, with our leadership in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity unquestioned, and with our country coming together as one great community across all the lines that divide us. That's what I want. That's what I've wanted every day since I first took the oath of office, and that is what I have worked for.

What is being a member of my political party got to do with that? Even though I have often enjoyed, both as Governor and as President, working with Republicans, sometimes

more, apparently, than they wanted to enjoy working with me—*[laughter]*—and I believe that our country's greatest causes go beyond party and that we ought to be able to find common ground. It is a good thing, too, that we have generally had over the last 220 years two different political groups. They gave us stability and honest, helpful debate and the ability to come together in principled compromise.

So why are you here, and why are you a Democrat? And does it really have anything to do with Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson? And if George Washington were alive today what would he be? The Federalists are long gone; the Whigs are long gone. You know, we had virtually a one-party system—Thomas Jefferson was such a good politician that after he became President, in order for John Quincy Adams to get elected President, after following Madison and Monroe, Quincy Adams virtually had to become a member of Jefferson's party even though Jefferson had beat his daddy for reelection—just to get elected.

Does any of that have anything to do with where we are today? I spent a lot of time in 1997 reading the history of America from, let's say, Andrew Jackson to Abraham Lincoln. I'm reading a great biography of Daniel Webster right now. I recommend it to you. And then reading the history of America from after Abraham Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt, because most people don't know much about it.

And what I basically concluded is this: At every important time, from the founding of the country through the Civil War through the growth of the industrial revolution through the Depression and World War II and the cold war, at every time there have always been three great questions—always—that defined America. Start with the Declaration of Independence: We pledge our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor to the proposition that all people are created equal and entitled to liberty; entitled to the pursuit of happiness—not the guarantee but the pursuit—and to form a more perfect Union. That's the whole story of America, every time: What can we do to widen the circle of opportunity, deepen the meaning of freedom, strengthen the bonds of our Union?

I'm ashamed to tell you that more or less from the time of Martin Van Buren until way after Abraham Lincoln became President, our party did not carry those elements most strongly; the Republicans did. But from the time Theodore Roosevelt handed the progressive mantle in this country over to Woodrow Wilson, or—throughout the 20th century, and then going back to our roots in the beginning, I think you can honestly say that the Democratic Party may not have always been right on every issue, but we were always on the right side of history. We were for widening the circle of opportunity, deepening the meaning of our freedom, strengthening the bonds of our Union.

That's what we need to be thinking about today. Why? Well, look ahead to the 21st century. We have a strong economy; some people want to give away the surplus now. I say, no, let's fix Social Security because when the baby boomers retire, we don't want to bankrupt the country or bankrupt our kids to take care of us. That's what we represent.

We have a very successful economy, but there's still neighborhoods and people who haven't participated in it. That's why we have to be the party of economic empowerment in devastated areas and higher standards in education for all. We have an increasingly diverse society. That's why we have to be the party for genuine racial harmony and strength out of our diversity. We have new challenges abroad, and we have to be the party working for peace and security from the Middle East to Northern Ireland against weapons of mass destruction. That's what we represent. But when you go back to the beginning, you'll see that's what we've always represented.

Go home today and see if you can write down in two sentences why you came here. And if you can, then you can come again, and you'll want to.

This country is going through a lot of great changes, but where we need to come out will require the leadership of people who honestly believe we have a permanent mission to widen the circle of opportunity, deepen the meaning of freedom, and strengthen the bonds of our human Union.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in the dining room at the Inn at National Hall. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Bob and Yvette Rose; Westport First Selectman Diane Goss Farrell; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Len Barrack, national finance chair, and Fran Katz, national finance director, Democratic National Committee; and Representative Barbara B. Kennelly, candidate for Governor of Connecticut.

Executive Order 13077—Further Amendment to Executive Order 13010, Critical Infrastructure Protection

March 10, 1998

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to provide for the review of the report by the President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection, and appropriate implementation, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 13010, as amended, is further amended as follows:

Section 6. Section 6(f), as amended, shall be further amended by deleting "March 15, 1998" and inserting "September 30, 1998" in lieu thereof.

Section 7. Section 7(a) shall be amended by deleting "March 15, 1998" and inserting "September 30, 1998" in lieu thereof.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 10, 1998

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:52 a.m., March 11, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on March 12.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources

March 10, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the 1996 Annual Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources, as required by section 1011 of the Alaska National

Interest Lands Conservation Act (Public Law 96-487; 16 U.S.C. 3151). This report contains pertinent public information relating to minerals in Alaska gathered by the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Bureau of Mines, and other Federal agencies.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 10, 1998.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on Federal
Agency Climate Change Programs
and Activities**

March 10, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 580 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998, I herewith provide an account of all Federal agency climate change programs and activities.

These activities include both domestic and international programs and activities directly related to climate change.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 10, 1998.

**Remarks at a Democratic Business
Council Dinner in Cincinnati, Ohio**

March 10, 1998

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, you can all tell I'm a little hoarse tonight, and I don't know if I can shout over the machine back there, but I'll do my best.

[At this point, dinner host Stanley M. Chesley asked that a heater be turned off.]

The President. Well, if you all start to turn blue—*[laughter]*—I promise to end the talk. I don't know if you can turn it off or not. But let me say first to Stan, thank you for having me here; thank you for having all of us here in your beautiful home, in this modest little tent. *[Laughter]* You know, it reminds me of the ones I used to camp out in when I was a Scout. *[Laughter]* Pitch a

little tent; get in your sleeping bag. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Dick Lawrence, and all the other cohosts. Thank you, Governor Romer, for your passion and your commitment and your wonderful remarks. I think Len Barrack is here, too, our new national finance chair of the Democratic Party—thank you. I want to thank Mary Boyle and Lee Fisher and Roxanne Qualls for running for public office. It's not so easy to do these days. They tell me I'm sort of impervious now. *[Laughter]* I'd also like to acknowledge a candidate for the Congress just across the State border in Kentucky, Ken Lucas, who is here. Ken, stand up. *[Applause]* Thank you for running. These are two of the people that, when they win, will give us a net gain of four seats, because we expect to change from Republican to Democrat in their seats. And we thank them. I want to thank David Leland for leading the Ohio Democratic Party.

And again, let me say to all of you, your presence here, your support, means a lot to me. The people of Ohio have been very good to Al Gore and Bill Clinton. We won here in 1992, and when I won the primary, it put me over the top. At the Democratic Convention in New York, the votes of Ohio put me over the top. On election night in November in '92, when they announced Ohio, they said Governor Clinton had enough electoral votes to be President. Then, in 1996, our victory margin here was more than 4 times what it had been in 1992. So for all of you who are from Ohio, I thank you so very much.

For those of you who come from other States, I thank you for the effort you made to come here. We've got a lot of people here from Louisiana, my neighboring State. They gave me a huge victory this last time, and I'm very grateful to them for that, and elected another Democratic Senator.

I want to give a little bit of a different talk tonight to kind of play off something Governor Romer said. I presume that most of you heard my State of the Union Address, so just imagine that I just said it to you again—that's what I want to do—all the details. What I want you to think about is the big picture for our country and then where you fit in and why you're here.

When I became President it was apparent to me that we were going through a period of not only dramatic change in how we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world but that it was change that was so different it was almost impossible to comprehend the full dimensions of it and that Washington was essentially paralyzed by an antiquated view of Government that only worked for people that were playing power games in Washington. And, in all candor, those who were telling us about it I think kind of liked the way it worked, because it was easy to explain: Democrats never met a program they didn't like, and Republicans thought Government was the source of all evil. And so they fought.

Now, for those of us who live out here in the real world, like Mayor Qualls, for example, I didn't know many Republicans who felt that way, and I didn't know any Democrats who felt that way, and I didn't know any real people who thought you could run a country that way. And if we tried to run any organization, from our families to our businesses to our local governments, by spending all of our time maneuvering for power and personal destruction of our opponent and wondering about how we would look in the paper tomorrow morning instead of what we would do for our children and grandchildren, our families, our communities, and our businesses would all break down. And so I basically asked the people to give me a chance to serve in '92 to try to build a country for the 21st century, to try to imagine what we wanted America to look like, take account of all these changes, and then figure out what the role of the Government ought to be and what kind of Government it would take to achieve that mission. That is simply all we've tried to do. And I tried to get good people together, and I suggested we show up for work every day and good things would happen. And that's what has happened.

Now you don't hear people engaging in this old "Government is the salvation; Government is the enemy" argument. We know that the role of Government is to give people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives, to create the conditions in which they can succeed, to provide for the security

of our people, and to do what we can to be a catalyst for ideas in the future.

Your Government now is the smallest it's been since John Kennedy, but it is a far more progressive Government than it was 6 years ago. And I'm proud of what's been done. I'm glad that we are going to have the first balanced budget in 30 years, that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, and the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, and the highest homeownership in history, the lowest welfare roles in 27 years, and the lowest crime rate in 24 years, and 15 million more Americans have jobs. I am very proud of all that. But what I want to say to you is the American people did that in no small measure because we did things in Washington that made sense and sort of acted as a catalyst to make it possible.

What we need to do now is to take these good times and to imagine the future we want for our children and then go build it and recognize that we're living in a time where knowledge is doubling every 5 years—literally, every 5 years. Medical discoveries at NIH that used to take 9 years, now because of the human genome project can be done in a matter of 9 days. Just in the health field alone, when we finish mapping the human gene and complete the kinds of things that are going on now with nerve transfers, it is conceivable that we will be able to solve health care problems that were once thought completely fatal. It is conceivable, if the rest of us will do our part, that we'll be able to get genetic maps that will enable us, if we have the discipline, to prevent all kinds of diseases and problems and the conditions we used to worry about. It is conceivable that people who have had their spinal cords severed will walk again. It has already happened in laboratory animals with their spinal cord severed; it had movement in their lower limbs.

If you look at the environment, where I'm very worried about the problems of global warming, we now know that we have the technology to reduce pollution and grow the economy to a greater degree than ever before. Our ability to do that depends, in my view, on two things. We've got to be committed to modernizing relentlessly the Government to do what works; and second, and far

more important, we've got to be committed to being faithful to the things that got us started as a country in the first place.

You want to make peace in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, fight the weapons of mass destruction, stand up against chemical and biological weapons, create an environment of global prosperity? You want to figure out how to make one America out of an evermore diverse country? A school district across the river from me in Virginia has people, kids from 180 different countries, speaking 100 different languages in one school district. You want to figure out how to give us the best system of education in the world? Everybody knows we've got the best system of college in the world; now we've opened the doors to everybody. Nobody thinks we've got the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world. You name an American problem; I argue you not only have to be modern in your thinking and willing to change, you've got to be faithful to how we got started. Roy talked about it in referencing Selma.

Why did you come here tonight? Because we've got a good economy and I have high numbers, or because you believe in the principles that got us here? I hope the answer is the latter. I hope the answer is the latter.

We've got a huge agenda. I mean, we're trying to finally pass comprehensive legislation to resolve the tobacco issue. We're trying to pass a Patient's Bill of Rights. We're trying to pass a bill that will lower class sizes in the first three grades of elementary school to 18 and help 5,000 schools be built or renovated. We've got a thousand things to do.

Let me just talk to you about three big things. How did this country get started? All these people came over here because they hated arbitrary power—unlimited, arbitrary power. And they said, "We believe freedom works better." Freedom to do two things: freedom to pursue happiness and freedom to get together to form a more perfect Union—freedom, opportunity, union. If you look at the whole history of America, look at Abraham Lincoln, what was he about? Freedom, Union and, oh, by the way, he signed the Morrill Land Grant Act, which is the greatest thing that ever happened to

higher education, built all the State universities in America.

Theodore Roosevelt—from Abraham Lincoln through Theodore Roosevelt, I hate to admit it, the Republican Party represented, more than we did, opportunity, freedom, and union. But from Woodrow Wilson through every single Democratic President down to the present day, the Democratic Party may not have been right on every issue, but we have been on the right side of history. It has been our party that has consistently stood for widening the circle of opportunity, deepening the meaning of America's freedom, and bringing this country together and the world together around a union of civilized people, based on civilized principles.

That's why I'm here. That's why I hope you're here. That is what is going to take us into the 21st century, and that is why these people should be elected to the offices they seek in Ohio and Kentucky. That's why I hope you're here tonight.

You ought to try this every now and then—you made a significant investment to come here tonight, and I'm going to hush now before you get pneumonia and sound worse than I do. *[Laughter]* But every now and then, you ought to do what I do every day; every day since I have been your President I have asked myself, what do I want my country to look like when we start the new millennium? What do I want my country to be like when my daughter has children her age? And for the last several months, as I have read more and more of the history of our country in periods where Americans don't know much about it, and before the Civil War and after the Civil War, for example, I have asked myself, why, really, am I a Democrat? Why do I belong to this party? Why am I proud to be here? It's more than my granddaddy remembering that Franklin Roosevelt cared about him. It's because of what we stand for and what we stand for is what got us started, what has carried us through, and what will make the next century another American Century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:24 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to attorney and dinner cohost Richard D. Lawrence; Len Barrack, national finance chair, Democratic

National Committee; Mary Boyle, Ohio candidate for U.S. Senate; Lee Fisher, candidate for Governor of Ohio; Mayor Roxanne Qualls of Cincinnati, candidate for Ohio's First Congressional District; Ken Lucas, candidate for Kentucky's Fourth Congressional District; and David Leland, chairman, Ohio Democratic Party.

Memorandum on Most-Favored-Nation Status for Vietnam

March 9, 1998

Presidential Determination No. 98-17

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on Section 402(c)(2)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974—Vietnam

Pursuant to section 402(c)(2)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-618, January 3, 1975; 88 Stat. 1978, 19 U.S.C. 2432(c)(2)(A)) as amended (the "Act"), I determine that a waiver by Executive order of the application of subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act with respect to Vietnam will substantially promote the objectives of section 402.

You are authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 11.

Memorandum on Most-Favored-Nation Status for Vietnam

March 9, 1998

Presidential Determination No. 98-18

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination Under Subsection 2(b)(2)(D) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as Amended—Vietnam

Pursuant to subsection 2(b)(2)(D) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, I determine that it is in the national interest for the Export-Import Bank of the United States to guarantee, insure, extend credit, and participate in the extension of credit in connection with the purchase or lease of any

product or service by, for use in, or for sale or lease to Vietnam.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and publish it in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 11.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Waiver on Most-Favored-Nation Status for Vietnam**

March 9, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 402(c)(2)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"), I have determined that a waiver of the application of subsections 402(a) and (b) with respect to Vietnam will substantially promote the objectives of section 402. A copy of that determination is attached. I also have received assurances with respect to the emigration practices of Vietnam required by section 402(c)(2)(B) of the Act. This message constitutes the report to the Congress required by section 402(c)(2).

Pursuant to subsection 402(c)(2) of the Act, I shall issue an Executive order waiving the application of subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act with respect to Vietnam.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 9, 1998.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 11.

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With
United Nations Secretary-General
Kofi Annan and an Exchange With
Reporters**

March 11, 1998

Secretary-General's Agreement With Iraq

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I'm delighted that the Secretary-General is here. We share a strong commitment to curtailing the threat of weapons of

mass destruction in general and to continuing the work in Iraq. And again let me say how pleased I am at the agreement that he worked out with Iraq to continue the inspections, as well as the access which has been provided to the UNSCOM inspectors which was previously denied. All that is encouraging.

Now, I think we have to remain vigilant. The last 6 days is not the same as the next 6 months, but it's all very hopeful. And the Secretary-General deserves a lot of appreciation from the United States and from all Americans for the work that has been done.

Q. Mr. President, are you both on the same wavelength in terms of what would happen if there is a breach in the agreement in the aftermath of that implementation? We understand there's some little friction.

President Clinton. Well——

Secretary-General Annan. Between the President and me, or the President and someone else?

Q. Between the President and you.

Secretary-General Annan. I see. Okay.

President Clinton. Well, over the weekend the Secretary-General said he thought that under the resolution there would have to be some consultations before any military force could be taken or used. We believe that the resolution gives us the authority to take whatever actions are necessary. But of course, we would consult. It would be unthinkable that we wouldn't do that. We do that all the time anyway. I spent an awful lot of time on the telephone with large numbers of world leaders in the last several weeks as this difficulty has unfolded, and so I'm not sure there is a conflict between our positions.

Q. What do you think, Mr. Secretary-General?

Secretary-General Annan. I think what the President has said is exactly what I said on television on Sunday. And not only was the President himself informed, as you will recall, Mrs.—the Secretary of State Albright consulted Council members, Ambassador Richardson, Secretary of Defense Cohen—and so there was consultation even this time around. So the consultation is an ongoing process and part of the way we do business in the international community. And I agree with what the President has said.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think about Senator Lott's criticism that this agreement is a sellout?

President Clinton. I just don't believe it is. The agreement on its own terms is clearly not a sellout. The agreement on its own terms preserves the integrity of the UNSCOM inspections. It does add some diplomats to the inspection process in the Presidential sites, but if the agreement is complied with—and again, I think the Secretary-General did a good job working through these issues over the weekend—then we will be able to do what the United States has always wanted, which is to complete the inspection process.

Again, let me say—I know I don't need to beat this dead horse, but I think it's worth repeating one more time. I see this issue with Iraq in the larger context of the threat I believe will be presented to the world for the next few decades from biological and chemical and perhaps even, God forbid, small-scale nuclear weapons—a different sort of weapons of mass destruction threat than we have faced in the past. And world leaders simply have to come to grips with the potential that is out there for organized groups—not just nations but terrorist groups, narcotraffickers, international criminals—to make and deploy such weapons for their own purposes, so that this is very important on its own merits. But it's also very important as the first of what I believe will have to be a many, many year effort by all peace-loving people to deal with this issue.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Q. Mr. President, how would you feel about testifying or talking to the grand jury and in some way giving your side of the story in the ongoing controversy?

President Clinton. Well, you know I'm not going to talk about that today. I can't. I've got to do the work that the people of this country hired me to do, so I can't—I'm not going to discuss that.

Q. Sir, with your pledge to cooperate fully, as you mentioned when this story first broke——

Secretary-General Annan. I wish you would concentrate on my issues.

President Clinton. I just don't have anything else to say about it.

Tobacco Legislation and Kosovo

Q. Sir, are you going to embrace the Conrad bill for tobacco, sir?

President Clinton. Let me say—I'd like to answer that question and then, if I could, I'd like to make one comment about Kosovo before you leave.

I have said that the Conrad bill embraces the principles that I feel strongly about. I haven't reviewed all of its provisions, and I'm not sure exactly what it does, for example, on the tobacco farmer issue, but in general I think Senator Conrad has put out a very good bill. And what I hope will happen is that either his bill will attract bipartisan support or that it will lead to a bipartisan bill reflecting the principles that I've outlined in the tobacco settlement—for the tobacco settlement.

I personally believe, even though there are now less than 70 scheduled work days left in this year, that Congress ought to have no higher priority than to get this done. We need to do this and get this behind us. There are a thousand lives a day on the line. We do not need to wait until next year.

Let me just make one comment if I might about Kosovo, because the Secretary of State has just returned from an arduous trip. The United States and I condemn in the strongest possible terms excessive violence that has led to the death of innocent civilians there. We believe the cause of it is the inadequate response by the Serbian Government to the legitimate concerns of the Albanian minority in Serbia, but majority in Kosovo.

I believe that the decision that the Secretary and other world leaders reached in the last few days, the reimposition of the sanctions, and the strong statements that were made coming out of the Contact Group, and the unity of the countries gives us some hope that we can resolve this. But this is a matter of great concern to me; I know it's of great concern to the Secretary-General. We do not want the Balkans to have more pictures like we've seen in the last few days, so reminiscent of what Bosnia endured. And I just want to make it absolutely clear that to me it's a very serious issue.

Secretary-General Annan. I agree.

Q. [*Inaudible*—consider military action, sir, as your Secretary of State has said in the past, and others?

President Clinton. We believe that no option should be ruled in or out now. But the Secretary of State, along with all of her colleagues—and there's been remarkable unanimity on this—they've taken a position that gives us a chance to avoid further bloodshed by all parties under all conditions. That's what I want.

Q. Have you been in touch with Milosevic?

President Clinton. Not directly, I have not.

President's Visit to Africa

Q. Will you have some travel tips on Africa for the President?

Secretary-General Annan. I think I'll be discussing a few interesting things, and I have one or two ideas that I would want to put to the President. I think it's great that he's going to Africa, and I think it's good for U.S.-African relationship, and the entire continent is excited that for the first time a sitting U.S. President is doing this. And it's a sign that U.S.-African relationship is on the upswing. And I'm very pleased about that.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Q. Mr. President, will the American people hear your version in the Lewinsky matter?

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Thank you, everyone. We're done. And the President has already answered that question. Good-bye.

Q. Do you all—

Press Secretary McCurry. No, we're done.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. [*Inaudible*—Middle East—[*inaudible*]?]

President Clinton. Well, we're going to discuss that. I hope it will. We're working very hard on that. We're doing everything we can to get it back on track. And I hope we can have a chance to talk about it.

Q. Will this visit have helped in some way?

President Clinton. It certainly can. It certainly can.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on International Women's Day

March 11, 1998

Thank you. Thank you very much, Doctor. And to all our distinguished guests here today, let me welcome you and say that I have rarely enjoyed anything in this room as much as I have what has already happened.

I've told this story before, but I feel just like I did the first time I gave remarks, a speech, as a public official. It was at one of these civic banquets, and it started at 6 o'clock in the evening. Everyone in the audience was introduced, hundreds of people—except three people, and they went home mad. [Laughter] Five people spoke before me. I got up to speak at a quarter to 10, and the man who introduced me did not do nearly as good a job as our distinguished guest from Thailand—he said, “You know, you could stop here and have had a very nice evening.” [Laughter] Well, we could certainly stop here and have had a very fine occasion.

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for being here. We've had a very good meeting, just before we came over here to talk about our shared goal of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and of securing Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The Secretary-General deserves the thanks of all Americans for securing the agreement with the Iraqi Government to open all sites for inspection. The commitments made to him, as well as last week's successful U.N. inspections in sites that had previously been closed, are quite significant. They must be carried out. The last 6 days must be replicated in the coming 6 months.

And the United States must remain vigilant to see that that occurs.

Let me say, since we're honoring women today, in case you all missed it and you want to be reminded of what the stakes are and what is going on now, I commend to you the op-ed article from the distinguished British physician in the hometown paper here today, discussing the consequences of the use of chemical weapons. Mr. Secretary-General, your work is important, and we intend to see that you succeed.

Let me also say that the United Nations is an invaluable partner in an increasingly interdependent world where we have to work together on things, as evidenced by the presence here today of members of the diplomatic corps, the Russian Health Minister, our distinguished physician from Thailand, and so many people from the U.N., and those of you in NGO's who work around the world. If the United States expects to continue to exercise a leadership role in a way that benefits our own people in the 21st century, we have got to pay our U.N. dues and fulfill our responsibilities.

The Secretary-General has supported the reform of the U.N. in positive ways, and I'm doing my best to get legislation through the Congress, which will fulfill our responsibilities to the United Nations, to the IMF, to the cause of U.N. reform.

I'm very proud to be here with all of you today to celebrate your progress and to chart our course to the future. I especially thank the Members of Congress who are here and those whom they represent who couldn't be present for their support and leadership. I thank the First Lady, the Secretary of State, and the Attorney General for the accomplishments of the last 5 years. I think it's fair to say, that as long as I live, I will always look back on the First Lady's speech at Beijing as one of the high watermarks of our public service in this White House.

You know, we always say that human rights must be a central pillar of America's foreign policy, but that is meaningless if those rights are not fully enjoyed by half the people on the planet. Secretary Albright has already discussed our assistance to Afghan women and girls who have suffered much under the

Taliban. Today I want to announce some further actions to advance your cause and our cause.

First, I'm instructing Secretary Albright and our AID Administrator, Brian Atwood, to expand our international efforts to combat violence against women. All too often, we know violence limits the choices open to women and young girls, damaging their health, disrupting their lives, obstructing their full participation in society. We will provide \$10 million to strengthen partnerships with governments and NGO's to help them to fight violence against women everywhere.

Second, I am launching a variety of steps to combat the inhumane practice of trafficking of women. I've asked our Attorney General to make sure that our own laws are adequate to the task we face here at home, that trafficking is prevented, victims are protected, traffickers are punished. And we will use our consular and law enforcement presence in other nations to combat trafficking worldwide, to assist victims, improve legislation, train judges and law enforcement officials in other lands. We will step up our public education campaigns abroad in an attempt to stop trafficking at its source.

Secretary Albright has already discussed her partnership with the Government of Ukraine to jointly develop a comprehensive strategy to fight trafficking to and from that country with the hope that our cooperation will become a model for other nations across the globe.

Finally, I have asked my Interagency Council on Women to convene an international conference to cast a spotlight on this human rights atrocity and develop new strategies to combat it. One important tool, as the Secretary-General has reminded us, for making progress on these issues is the Women's Human Rights Treaty, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It has the cumbersome acronym of CEDAW, but its message is very simple.

Again, I thank the Secretary-General for his leadership. I ask you to think about this

convention and its impact. It has a proven record of helping women around the world to combat violence, gain economic opportunity, strike against discriminatory laws. Its provisions are consistent with United States law, which already provides strong protections for women. It offers a means for reviewing and encouraging other nations' compliance.

Yet, because of our historic and often manifest allergy to joining international conventions, we remain alone in our hemisphere, alone among the industrialized nations of the world, apart from 161 other nations alongside nations like Sudan and North Korea in not ratifying this treaty.

This is not an issue of party but of principle. Today I am sending a letter to the Senate leadership asking them to ratify the treaty, and I ask the Senate to do so this year. We signed this treaty in the late 1970's. Finally, after we took office, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted the treaty out of committee with a bipartisan vote in 1994. If we are going to be true to our own legacy of leadership in human rights, we must ratify this treaty.

When you look ahead to this new century and new millennium and you ask yourselves what you would like the story of the next 100 years to be, surely all of us want one big chapter to be about how, finally, in all nations of the world, people of all races and ethnic groups, of many different religious persuasions and cultural practices came together to guarantee that every young girl got a chance to grow up to live up to the fullest of her abilities and to live out her dreams. Let that be our mission as we leave today.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Saisuree Chutikal, Parliament of Thailand, who introduced the President; and Dr. Christine Gosden, professor of medical genetics, University of Liverpool, whose editorial-page commentary on Iraqi use of chemical weapons appeared in the Washington Post on March 11.

Memorandum on Steps To Combat Violence Against Women and Trafficking in Women and Girls

March 11, 1998

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, the Director of the United States Information Agency

Subject: Steps to Combat Violence Against Women and Trafficking in Women and Girls

As we celebrate International Women's Day today, we highlight the achievements of women around the world. We also acknowledge that there is much work yet to be done to ensure that women's human rights are protected and respected. The momentum generated by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 continues to encourage our government, as well as nations around the world, to fulfill our commitments to improve the lives of women and girls.

I have, once again, called upon the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, thus enabling the United States to join 161 other countries in support of the Convention. This Convention is an effective tool that can be used to combat violence against women, reform unfair inheritance and property rights, and strengthen women's access to fair employment and economic opportunity. Ratification of this Convention will enhance our efforts to promote the status of women around the world. As we look at Afghanistan and the egregious human rights violations committed against women and girls at the hands of the Taliban, we recognize that this is an issue of global importance.

My Administration is working hard to eliminate violence against women in all its forms. Our efforts help to combat this human rights violation around the world and here in the United States. As part of the 1994 Crime Bill, I signed into law the Violence Against Women Act. This legislation declares certain forms of violence against women to be Federal crimes and provides for critical assistance to States, tribes, and local commu-

nities in their efforts to respond to this problem. The Department of Justice is implementing the Violence Against Women Act and working with communities across the country to promote criminal prosecution and provide services to victims. Through the Department of Health and Human Services, we have established for the first time a nationwide domestic violence hotline, so that women throughout the country can call one toll-free number and be connected to a local domestic violence support center. We have come a long way since 1994, and I am proud of our efforts.

Each day recognition of the importance of this issue grows around the world. In recent years, many countries have begun to respond to calls for legislation and government programs addressing violence against women. The international community increasingly regards violence against women as a fundamental human rights violation, an impediment to a nation's development, and an obstacle to women's full participation in democracy.

Today I am directing the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the President's Interagency Council on Women to continue and expand their work to combat violence against women here in the United States and around the world. We have made great progress since the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, but there remains much to be done. We must continue to work to implement the Act fully and to restore the Act's protection for immigrant victims of domestic violence here in the United States so that they will not be forced to choose between deportation and abuse.

The problem of trafficking in women and girls, an insidious form of violence, has received a great deal of attention from the world community. This is an international problem with national implications. Here in the United States, we have seen cases of trafficking for the purposes of forced prostitution, sweatshop labor, and exploitative domestic servitude. The victims in these cases often believe they will be entering our country to secure a decent job. Instead, they are virtual prisoners, with no resources, little recourse, and no protection against violations of their human rights. My Administration is committed to combating trafficking in

women and girls with a focus on the areas of prevention, victim assistance and protection, and enforcement. Our work on this issue has been enhanced by a strong partnership with nongovernmental groups and the U.S. Congress.

I am also directing the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the President's Interagency Council on Women to increase national and international awareness about trafficking in women and girls. I want to ensure that young women and girls are educated about this problem so that they will not fall prey to traffickers' tactics of coercion, violence, fraud, and deceit.

I also want to provide protection to victims. And finally, I want to enhance the capacity of law enforcement worldwide to prevent women and girls from being trafficked and ensure that traffickers are punished.

Therefore, I direct:

I. The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, to strengthen and expand our efforts to combat violence against women in all its forms around the world. These efforts should be responsive to government and nongovernment requests for partnerships, expert guidance, and technical assistance to address this human rights violation.

II. The President's Interagency Council on Women to coordinate the United States Government response on trafficking in women and girls, in consultation with nongovernmental groups.

III. The Attorney General to examine current treatment of victims of trafficking including to determine ways to insure: the provision of services for victims and witnesses in settings that secure their safety; precautions for the safe return of victims and witnesses to their originating countries; witness cooperation in criminal trials against traffickers; and consideration of temporary and/or permanent legal status for victims and witnesses of trafficking who lack legal status.

IV. The Attorney General to review existing U.S. criminal laws and their current use to determine if they are adequate to prevent

and deter trafficking in women and girls, to recommend any appropriate legal changes to ensure that trafficking is criminalized and that the consequences of trafficking are significant, and to review current prosecution efforts against traffickers in order to identify additional intelligence sources, evidentiary needs and resource capabilities.

V. The Secretary of State to use our diplomatic presence around the world to work with source, transit, and destination countries to develop strategies for protecting and assisting victims of trafficking and to expand and enhance anti-fraud training to stop the international trafficking of women and girls.

VI. The Secretary of State to coordinate an intergovernmental response to the Government of Ukraine's request to jointly develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking in women and girls from and to Ukraine. The U.S.-Ukraine cooperation will serve as a model for a multidisciplinary approach to combat trafficking that can be expanded to other countries.

VII. The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Attorney General, to expand and strengthen assistance to the international community in developing and enacting legislation to combat trafficking in women and girls, to provide assistance to victims of trafficking, and to continue to expand efforts to train legal and law enforcement personnel worldwide.

VIII. The Secretary of State and the Director of the United States Information Agency to expand public awareness campaigns targeted to warn potential victims of the methods used by traffickers.

IX. The President's Interagency Council on Women to convene a gathering of government and nongovernment representatives from source, transit, and destination countries and representatives from international organizations to call attention to the issue of trafficking in women and girls and to develop strategies for combating this fundamental human rights violation.

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

March 11, 1998

Dear _____:

I write to seek your support in obtaining Senate consent to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is the most comprehensive and detailed international treaty developed to date relating to the rights of women. The United States actively participated in the drafting of CEDAW and signed the treaty in 1980. Although the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted in favor of ratification in 1994, the Senate has not formally considered the treaty since that time.

The rights of women are an issue of global importance—and one that is integral to our foreign policy. The success of any government depends ultimately on ensuring that all its citizens can participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives. Too many societies continue to shunt women to the sidelines, limiting their access to education, health care, and economic opportunity. Moreover, violence against women remains a widespread problem. I think you would agree that, as we enter the next century, we must address these issues. CEDAW provides us with an effective tool for doing so.

I believe that the ratification of CEDAW is critical to our efforts to advance the status of women throughout the world. To date, 161 countries have ratified CEDAW, including all our European allies and most of our important trading partners. The United States is one of the few countries that has not. This impedes our efforts to ensure that women everywhere are treated fairly and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

As you know, U.S. state and federal law already provides strong protections for women and is largely consistent with the provisions of CEDAW. In 1994, the Administration submitted a detailed analysis of the consequences of CEDAW ratification for U.S. law. All concerns at that time were addressed by the small number of reservations, understandings, and declarations upon which the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the State Department agreed. These include an explicit understanding that the treaty does not create a right to an abortion.

Today, in celebration of International Women's Day, I am announcing that obtaining Senate advice and consent to the ratification of CEDAW is a top Administration priority during this session of Congress. I am also announcing my goal of having the full Senate act on CEDAW this year, which marks the 150th anniversary of the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York.

I would very much like to have your support in ratifying CEDAW and look forward to working with you on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Telephone Remarks With Representative-Elect Lois Capps

March 11, 1998

President Clinton. Hello, Lois?

Representative-Elect Capps. Hello, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Oh, I didn't know you were on the phone. Congratulations.

Representative-Elect Capps. Well, thank you so much.

President Clinton. I'm so thrilled for you.

Representative-Elect Capps. It was a tremendous experience, and I owe a lot to all of the people who are listening.

President Clinton. Well, you made a great grassroots campaign, and I think you really persuaded people that you would be a strong, independent voice for them. And of course, we were all thrilled that you ran on the issues that I think are critical to the future of the country, on education and the Patient's Bill of Rights and the tobacco issue.

I'm just ecstatic. But I know how hard you worked, and you must be so proud today.

Representative-Elect Capps. I'm very proud and very grateful. It's an affirmation of Walter as well.

President Clinton. Certainly it was. It certainly was.

The Vice President is on the phone with me. I know he wants to say something.

Vice President Gore. I'll wait until Dick Gephardt goes. Go ahead, Dick.

Representative Richard A. Gephardt. Thank you, Al. I thank you, Mr. President, for having this call. And Lois, we all here in the House congratulate you on this wonderful victory. It's a real testimony to you and the kind of campaign you ran and the way you related to the issues that people really care about in your district—education, health care, pensions. We believe this campaign, your campaign, is the formula by which we will win the majority back in the House in 1998.

So, congratulations. God love you and your family. And you're going to carry on in the spirit of your dear, wonderful husband, Walter. And we look forward to having you here next week.

Representative-Elect Capps. Oh, thank you, Mr. Gephardt.

Representative Martin Frost. And Lois, this is Martin Frost. If I could just say a brief word, because Dick and I have to go vote in a minute—something you'll be doing very shortly—this was an extraordinary victory. In fact, we're watching you on television right now; we see you on CNN. The fact that you won by such a significant margin, the 53 to 45, the 13,000-vote margin, is more than any of us had hoped for. We knew you were a terrific candidate, but we were just overwhelmed with your victory. And everyone here is talking about it in the cloakrooms and in the halls and everywhere up here on the Hill today. It is the number one topic, and people can hardly wait for you to get here next week.

Representative-Elect Capps. Could I now say, this is all music, sweet music, to my ears. And I want to thank you, all of you, and that which you represent, for the support that you gave, actually, for the freedom that you all allowed us to have here to run a local

race. And that began in the very beginning, when I felt no undue pressure as a grieving widow to make a decision before I was ready to. And that carried through in the kind of support that you gave us here and the kind of interest you showed then and do show now and in kind of letting us take the lead and listen to what people on the central coast of California were telling us about what are their important issues.

And you remember, Mr. President, I said when—in the midst of the campaign when I heard the State of the Union speech, I said to someone with whom I was with, it sounded as though you were walking among the people here on the central coast with us. And that's how much this resonates here. The issues of child care, the issues of our local schools and health care and the economy staying strong and keeping Social Security solvent—these are the refrains that we have heard and responded to.

And I believe, you know, it's across party lines. It's what the mainstream of, I can tell you for sure, one district in California, the 22d, really has compelled me to carry to Washington. And I'm so thankful that now I can do that, having paid attention to them and able to listen and join in the conversation there that you all have going.

President Clinton. Well, thank you. You know, we've only got 68 days left.

Representative-Elect Capps. Okay.

President Clinton. We need you.

Representative-Elect Capps. We'd better get busy.

Vice President Gore. Lois, this is Al Gore.

Representative-Elect Capps. Hello.

Vice President Gore. This is Al Gore, Lois. And I also want to congratulate you on running a fantastic race. And it was about the issues that Americans really care about and the future of education, the environment, technology and schools, child care, the others that you mentioned. And we all look forward to working very closely with you on those issues and on improving the lives of the American people. And God bless your family and Walter's memory.

Representative-Elect Capps. Thank you.

Vice President Gore. And we miss Laura. She did a great job for you.

Representative-Elect Capps. Well, she has. She's coming back soon. She's excited to get back there, as well. And Mr. Gore, thank you. You just touched on all of the issues that we are going to be working on together.

Vice President Gore. Great. God bless.
President Clinton. Lois, we need you. We'll be glad when you get here.

Representative-Elect Capps. I'm hurrying up. We'll be there soon.

President Clinton. Give our love to Laura. I'll see you.

Representative-Elect Capps. Thank you so much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:57 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Representative-Elect Capps' daughter, Laura, who serves as Staff Director for the Office of Speechwriting at the White House. Lois Capps was elected Representative of California's 22d Congressional District in a special election on March 10, to succeed her husband, Representative Walter Capps, who died on October 28, 1997.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the "African Growth and Opportunity Act"

March 11, 1998

In this year's State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to support an initiative to strengthen economic ties to Africa. Today, I am pleased that Congress has taken an important step forward on legislation that will open a new era of U.S.-African trade and investment relations. The strong bipartisan vote in the House in support of the "African Growth and Opportunity Act" offers the way for a brighter future for Africa.

The United States has a vital stake in a stable, prosperous Africa. Later this month, when I travel to Africa, I will deliver the message that the United States stands ready to be a partner in Africa's prosperity. A majority of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries have adopted market-oriented economic and political reforms in the past seven years. A stronger, stable, prosperous Africa will be a better economic partner, a better partner for

security and peace, and a better partner in the fight against the new transnational threats of drug trafficking, crime, terrorism, the spread of disease and environmental degradation. This bill—by significantly broadening market access, spurring growth in Africa, and helping the poorest nations eliminate or reduce their bilateral debt—would help African nations that are committed to undertake difficult economic reforms to build better lives for their people.

We have an historic opportunity to support the renaissance in Africa. I want to commend Speaker Gingrich, Chairman Archer, Congressman Rangel, Congressman McDermott, Congressman Crane, Chairman Gilman, Congressman Hamilton, Congressman Payne, Congresswoman McKinney, Congressman Jefferson, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, Congresswoman Waters, Congressman Royce, Congressman Menendez, and all those who have devoted themselves to helping that transformation. I look forward to working with the Senate to enact this landmark legislation as quickly as possible.

Remarks to the National Association of Attorneys General

March 12, 1998

Thank you very much, Attorney General Doyle. Attorney General Reno, thank you for joining us here today and for the work you have done with the States' attorneys general and local prosecutors on domestic violence and to reduce the crime rate and a whole host of other issues. I want to thank Fred Duval for the work he does on my behalf with you and this association. And I'd also like to thank the two former attorneys general that are working for me: Bonnie Campbell, who heads the Attorney General's effort on violence against women; and Chuck Burson, who was formerly president of NAAG, now the Vice President Counsel.

I've really been looking forward to coming over here today. I have had the opportunity to know and work with most of you personally, and I see some former attorneys general out in the audience who were my colleagues and friends. I thank them for being here.

It used to be a staple of all my speeches that the best job I ever had was being an attorney general, and to me it was. I didn't have to hire or fire anybody—[laughter]—except the people on the staff. I didn't have to appoint or disappoint anybody. [Laughter] Every unpopular thing I did I blamed on the Constitution. [Laughter] Now, I'm just a punching bag from time to time—[laughter]—who's grateful to have an Attorney General. It's a very interesting thing. [Laughter]

On a more serious note, I loved the job that you now hold. And I suspect that I ran for it for the same reason you did: I wanted to protect families and consumers and enforce the law. And you have been very strong allies of our administration and good partners in those endeavors, and I thank you for that very much. In many ways, we are still colleagues, whether it's on domestic violence or reducing crime or giving our young people a more positive future.

Now we're working together to bring our country to the verge of one of the greatest public health achievements in the history of our Nation, a historic triumph in our fight to protect our children from the deadly threat of tobacco. Together we have waged a great struggle in the courts, in the Congress, across the negotiation tables and in our communities, where our children have been the targets of mass-marketing schemes and where you have been on the frontlines to protect them from this effort to get them involved in addiction to tobacco.

We've made a lot of great strides in just a few years. And whenever I talk to any of you who are involved in this, naturally enough, we're always talking about what the present state of play is and what all the various issues are and what's going to happen tomorrow or what happened yesterday. And we can talk about that some more, too. But what I'd like to do is take just a few moments to see how far we've come and then to visualize the outcome that I believe we will achieve—first, to look back and see why we ever took on the tobacco companies in the first place when, when some of you filed your suits, it was laughable; people said it was a fight that was unwinnable; and second, to look ahead to the end of the day, what we

have to do to win the fight, to ensure a healthier, stronger America for our children in the new century.

We are poised to enter this new century stronger than we have been in decades. This is a great moment for our country, full of opportunity. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, smallest welfare rolls in 27 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years. It is a great moment of opportunity.

We have a chance to open vistas of peace and prosperity and freedom that our people have never before known. Because most of the next century will belong to our children and grandchildren instead of to ourselves, we, all of us together, have worked these last 5 years to give them a future of safety, health, and security. We've done a lot of specific things in addition to the economic and crime and welfare statistics that I talked about. Here in Washington we have worked with many of you to implement a zero tolerance policy to keep guns and drugs out of schools. The V-chip and the television ratings and educational television have helped parents to strengthen the values as well as the minds of our children.

We've worked to bring order and discipline to our children's lives by supporting community reform efforts like curfews, school uniforms, tougher truancy laws; and to bring hope into their lives by supporting higher educational standards and keeping schools open after hours, because, as all of you know, most juvenile crime is committed when the school doors close for the day but before the parents get home from work. We've worked to support community service, from America Reads to AmeriCorps to America's Challenge. And now we're helping to get millions of uninsured children the health insurance they need.

This is a moment of great opportunity but also of great obligation. And we have to build on this powerful momentum to make the future we want for our children. To me, that's the most important thing that you are doing in the tobacco litigation.

It is so easy in good times to relax, but you and I both know that the world is changing so rapidly that whatever is happening

today, there will be something different happening tomorrow. The sheer volume of knowledge is doubling every 5 years now. We are literally—because of human genome research, we are literally solving problems in a matter of days that took years to solve not long before I took office. The World Wide Web is growing by something like 65,000 web sites an hour now. When I took office, there were 50—[laughter]—50. Think about that. Just a little over 5 years ago the Web was the province of a handful of scientists, physicists, started by a Government research project in the Defense Department. The Government, quite properly, having done the basic research and getting it up and going, got out of the way, and now it's the fastest growing organ of human interaction ever, in all of human history.

I say that again to hammer home the fact that when people have confidence because times are good but leaders know times are changing, there is a heavier than normal responsibility to do the hard things for tomorrow. That is why it is so important that you have engaged this tobacco issue. I cannot overstate it. You know quite well that smoking kills more people every day than AIDS, alcohol, auto accidents, murders, suicides, drugs, and fires combined and that nearly 90 percent of smokers lit their first cigarette before they turned 18. David Kessler, the former FDA Commissioner, called smoking a pediatric disease. Today and every day, 3,000 children start smoking illegally, and 1,000 will have their lives shortened as a result. This is a national epidemic. It is a national tragedy. We must struggle to end it until we prevail.

Just last month, the Journal of the American Medical Association concluded that advertisements and promotions were even more crucial than peer pressure in getting teens to start smoking. Now, the law says that they can't advertise tobacco products on television or radio, but you can't escape the ads anywhere else, in our magazines, our sports centers, on billboards. Tobacco is one of the most heavily advertised products in America.

In the early 1990's, Joe Camel alone had an advertising budget of \$75 million. He could have run for President. [Laughter] And that's a pretty good investment from the to-

bacco companies' point of view. More 3- to 6-year-olds could recognize Joe Camel than Mickey Mouse.

The advertisements have taken a deadly toll. That's why you began to bring your lawsuits. That's why in 1995 I launched a nationwide effort to prevent our tobacco companies from advertising to children, to educate children about the dangers of smoking, to reduce children's access to tobacco products. Working with the FDA, we made it the law of the land, essentially what was already the law in your States: no sale of products to anyone under 18; required ID showings for anyone under 27 to make sure teens don't buy cigarettes. And I'm very proud that last year the courts upheld this authority.

Without the foresight and courage and determination of the attorneys general the progress would not have occurred. You put tobacco companies on the stand in courtrooms across America. You brought them to the bargaining table. You extracted important concessions. You raised awareness of tobacco's tragic cost to our economy and our children. You got documents out that needed to be out. Your work has been essential and the American people owe you an eternal debt of gratitude.

The worst part of this epidemic is that it isn't the product of deadly natural forces raging out of control but a sophisticated, deliberate marketing campaign targeted at our children. I don't know how many of you saw it over the weekend, but there was a story that I saw on at least two different networks about this deadly virus that gets into small rats in the Southwest, and because of El Niño and the warming, the area of influence of this little animal is larger. And the couple hundred people that have gotten this infection from the mice, the small mice, in the last 4 years—the fatality rate has been 50 percent.

We spend a lot of time in our administration trying to make sure that the National Institutes of Health and the CDC has the investment they need both to do the research and then to set up the mechanisms to deal with the spread of disease. And as more and more of us travel to faraway places and more and more people from faraway places travel to us and we meet strangers in the airport,

one of the great challenges of the 21st century will be the spread of disease. One of the things that global warming has done is to raise mosquitoes bearing malaria virus to higher and higher altitudes now, so more and more people are exposed to it. Then they travel and more and more people come in contact with it. There is now an actual public health phenomenon called airport malaria.

I'm saying that not to scare you—we'll figure out how to handle it, we'll deal with it—[laughter]—but the point is that this is what we ought to be worried about. That is, we ought to be worried about those things that are arising out of the natural course of events over which we have no control, that require a public health response. We should not have to worry about things that are the deliberate result of calculated decisions to make money. We shouldn't do that.

If it hadn't been for your efforts, we might have had to wait another 30 years for the documents that have confirmed our worst suspicions. You did that. For years we've known cigarette makers study kids' habits and tastes, preying on them with targeted marketing. Joe Camel T-shirts, Virginia Slims rock concerts, toy race cars emblazoned with tobacco company logos, the free giveaways tell the tale.

Just last year some tobacco companies wanted to market what some called a kiddie-pack, smaller, more affordable packs of cigarettes, sort of a starter kit. And I was in a community last week in which a person concerned about this told me that more and more cigarettes were being sold to children one by one, for a quarter a piece.

Now, as the documents are released, we begin to learn the whole story. In an internal document, one company proudly described its brand as "the brand of choice among teenagers." Another described its plan to flavor cigarettes with apples, honey, or Coca-Cola because, "it's a well-known fact that teenagers like sweet products." Another company memorandum put it even more bluntly: "The 14 to 24 age group," it says, "represent tomorrow's cigarette business"—and tomorrow's Medicare and Medicaid bills and hospital wards and premature funerals.

This avalanche of evidence is bringing down the walls of deceit. Now we know the

facts. Now you have acted. Now Congress must act. Congress must pass comprehensive tobacco legislation that gets the industry out of the business of marketing cigarettes to our children. Thirty years of deception—now Congress must act to bring it to an end. Thirty years of manipulation—Congress must now act to bring it to an end. And it must act now.

Most Americans have 200 days left in their work calendar this year. But the work calendar schedule in Washington is only 68 days, partly because it's an election year, partly because of things that are scheduled for holidays, partly because Members do have to go home, legitimately, and work in their home States and districts. I say that to say 68 days is not a lot left this year, but it's more than enough to get this job done. The attorneys general have proved that this is not an issue of party but an issue of principle. It's not an issue that divides America but one that can unite us.

I was in Utah the other day, not exactly the strongest Democratic State in America. [Laughter] And I was with Senator Bennett and Governor Leavitt and the two House Members, and I said, "It's wonderful that I'm here in Utah with my family just as this tobacco fight is opening. It's the only issue I can think of that all of Utah is to the left of me on"—[laughter]—"and praise the Lord for the Mormon Church." [Laughter]

But it's a funny story, but it illustrates a very serious and sober point. This is an American issue. This is not about politics. Believe me, there is a solid majority of Congress in both Houses, comprised of members of both parties, who want to do this and do this right. Now, it's a complicated issue; there are complicated questions of the jurisdiction in the Congress, which committees and subcommittees should have this piece or that piece of the legislation. A lot of people are having trouble with how you work out the future liability of the tobacco companies, and how much to give up in return for the advertising fix that we want, which otherwise may not prevail in the courts. You know, there are all these questions out there.

But what I want to tell you is that we can do this. And you have to help us do this. You have to go to the Congress and say, "A

thousand kids a day is too high a price to pay for another year's delay." [Applause] Thank you. Thank you very much. I think we should say clearly and simply that Congress should not go home until it passes comprehensive tobacco legislation. This is one thing that has to be done this year.

Now, I have said I would support any comprehensive bipartisan legislation if it meets five principles: I believe it must raise the price of cigarettes by up to \$1.50 a pack over the next decade and impose tough penalties on companies that continue to sell to kids; it must reaffirm the FDA's authority to regulate tobacco products; it must get the tobacco companies out of the business of marketing to our children; it must further our other public health goals; and it must protect the tobacco farmers and their communities. And I take it we're all agreed on that; I think that is very important.

Today, I'm happy to report that Senators John Chafee, Bob Graham, and Tom Harkin are introducing the first bipartisan bill that meets all five of these principles, and I strongly support their effort. It is a good, tough bill. I hope it gets wide support. The evidence is clearer than ever that this legislation will save lives. We have now a recent study that says if Congress acts, we can cut teen smoking by almost half in the next 5 years alone. That means we can stop almost 3 million children from beginning. That means we can prevent almost 1 million premature deaths.

Again, I say, sure, there will be important issues to be worked out, even among allies. Even among yourselves, you have to worry about that. I know that. But if you decide that you have to act, then you figure out a way to work out the issues. This 30-year struggle also, I will say, is not about money. There are some budget and spending issues in Congress between me and the Democrats and the Republicans—three or four or five different ideas. But if we just remember this is not about money, it's not about the size of the prize we can extract from the tobacco industry. It is about fulfilling our responsibilities to our children as parents, as a Government, as a Nation.

You have shown enormous courage and foresight in helping us get where we are

today. Again, I would say, in the heat of the moment do not forget how far we have come. If someone had told you just a couple of years ago we would be here today, hardly a one of you would have believed it. Be proud of what you have done, but bring all your influence to bear on the Congress. It's not a question of party; it's a matter of principle. And it will have a very great deal to do with what your country looks like when your children are sitting where you are today.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the grand ballroom at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Doyle, president, National Association of Attorneys General; Fred DuVal, Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs; Bonnie Campbell, former Iowa attorney general; and Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah.

Message on the Observance of Saint Patrick's Day, 1998

March 12, 1998

Warmest greetings to everyone celebrating Saint Patrick's Day. On this day dedicated to Ireland's great patron saint, I join millions of other Americans across our country in remembering with pride the roots of our Irish heritage.

As it has been for so many immigrants, America has always been a beacon of hope for the Irish people. And the Irish people have always been a source of light and energy to keep that beacon shining brightly. They arrived with little. But the Irish did not come to America empty-handed. They brought with them strong arms and an even stronger spirit that would help to build our nation's great canals, bridges, and railroads; that would wrest coal from Pennsylvania's mines and raise the skyscrapers of New York City. They brought with them a love of words that enriched American journalism and literature. They brought a great reverence for education and built schools across the country renowned for their scholarship and social conscience.

Perhaps their greatest gifts to America have been an abiding love of liberty and a patriotic spirit. Irish Americans have served with distinction in every American conflict,

from the Revolutionary War to the Persian Gulf, and their keen sense of social justice made them among the first and most effective voices for labor reform. Generations of Irish Americans entered public service to reach out to those in need—to feed the poor, find jobs for the unemployed, fight for racial equality, and champion social reform.

The United States continues to draw strength and vision from our multicultural, multiracial society. As we celebrate Saint Patrick's Day once again, we remember with special pride the gifts of Irish Americans: faith in God, lilt and laughter, love of family and community, and an unswerving commitment to freedom and justice that continues to enrich our nation.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

Bill Clinton

Proclamation 7073—National Poison Prevention Week, 1998

March 12, 1998

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Protecting the well-being of our children must always be our highest priority as a people and as a Nation. Innocent and vulnerable, children are eager to explore the world around them, and in our society today, where every home is filled with potentially dangerous chemicals, this can put our children at grave risk. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, over one million children are exposed each year to potentially deadly medicines and household chemicals—a danger we must not, and need not, tolerate.

Since the first observance of National Poison Prevention Week 36 years ago, the number of children who have died each year from accidental poisonings has dropped dramatically, from 450 in 1962 to 29 in 1995. This remarkable progress is due in part to the dedicated efforts of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Poison Prevention Week Council, and our Nation's poison control centers. Nevertheless we still

have much work to do if we are to prevent even a single child from suffering or dying due to poisoning. Because poisonings are almost always preventable, there are simple, practical steps we can take to protect our children: use child-resistant packaging correctly; keep toxic materials locked up and out of the reach of children; and, if a poisoning does occur, call a poison control center immediately.

This year, the focus of National Poison Prevention Week is the danger posed by pesticides, which are involved in the poisonings of thousands of young children each year. While the Environmental Protection Agency requires that most pesticides be in child-resistant packaging, it is up to parents and caregivers to make sure that these materials and other household chemicals and medicines are kept locked up and out of the reach of children. By taking a few moments to read labels and store pesticides properly, we can avoid a lifetime of regret.

To encourage the American people to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take responsible preventive measures, the Congress, by joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March of each year as "National Poison Prevention Week."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 15, through March 21, 1998, as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies and activities and by learning how to protect our children from poisons.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:18 a.m., March 13, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 16.

Proclamation 7074—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1998

March 12, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This year, as we mark the 177th anniversary of the advent of Greece's struggle for independence, we celebrate with the Hellenic Republic and recognize the close ties that have long existed between Greece and the United States. Through two centuries, our nations have enjoyed a strong and enduring friendship. For more than half a century, we have stood together in NATO, modern history's most successful alliance.

Our bonds are deeper still, however, for we are joined by blood, culture, and a profound commitment to shared values. Greek ideals of democracy and freedom inspired our Nation's founders and breathed life into America's experiment with democratic self-government. Generations of Greek Americans have enriched every aspect of our national life—in the arts, sciences, business, politics, and sports. Through hard work, love of family and community, steadfast commitment to principle, and a deep love of liberty, they have contributed greatly to the prosperity and peace we enjoy today.

The bonds between America and Greece, in fact, have never been stronger than they are today. We are partners in the effort to find a lasting, peaceful solution in the Balkans and to build an enlarged NATO that will enhance our common security. As our two nations prepare for the challenges and possibilities of the new millennium, we look forward to building on the partnership so that the seeds of democracy we have nurtured together for so long will bear fruit in a bright future not only for ourselves, but for our global community.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1998, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day

of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:18 a.m., March 13, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 16.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Senator Ernest Hollings

March 12, 1998

Thank you very much. First of all, on behalf of Senator and Mrs. Hollings, myself, and all the southerners present at this dinner—[laughter]—I want to thank Esther Coopersmith for serving okra and cornbread. I don't know what the rest of you thought about it, but I felt good about it. [Laughter]

Esther, I thank you for your friendship to me and to Fritz and Peatsy, and for opening your home and bringing your whole family together; especially thank you for Connie, who's done such wonderful work for me.

Don't you love to hear Fritz Hollings talk? You know, one night back in 1985—this is a true story—I was a lowly Governor—[laughter]—or as my predecessor said, a Governor of a small Southern State. And I was sitting at home one night, and I decided I would do something responsible, so I flipped on the television, and instead of turning to HBO, I turned to C-SPAN. And it was more entertaining than HBO because it was a roast of Senator Hollings.

One of the speakers was Senator Kennedy, who commented on Senator Hollings' campaign in 1984, and said that he was the first non-English-speaking person ever to serve in the Senate and a great inspiration to non-English-speaking Americans everywhere. [Laughter] And every time some of my friends get all upset about these English-only

referendums, I thought to myself, you know, if Fritz didn't have to run for reelection, they could send him to California; he could beat it all by himself. *[Laughter]*

Anyway, I'm glad to be here speaking for a man who Strom Thurmond believes is too young to serve the people of South Carolina. *[Laughter]* But I think he's about to get the hang of it.

I also want to say that one of the things—this is serious now—there are several things I like about Senator Hollings. Number one, he's smart. Number two, he works hard, and he's not—he is just as dogged today as he was the first day he showed up here, the first time he took the oath of office, which I think is important. Number three, he believes that when people elect or reelect him, they have given him, for a while, their power to do something with.

You heard him say that. You know, sometimes I feel like a person that's really out of his time here. I keep telling people to think about the future, but sometimes I feel like an artifact of the past. When I come to Washington and I read and hear what people say about politics, it looks to me like people are in love with power and positioning for it. I thought the whole purpose of democracy was to give people power in a limited fashion for a limited time so they could do something with it for the benefit of the public at large. That is the way Fritz Hollings has lived his entire public life and another reason he should be elected in this election year. And I really appreciate it.

Let me just say one other thing about the past. He's already talked about the vote to reduce the deficit in 1993. It was a very hard vote. It was an agonizing vote for a southern Democrat. It's one of the reasons that we lost the Congress in '94, because people had not yet felt the benefits of it.

But we had to do something. The deficit was \$290 billion; it was projected to be \$370 billion this year. It's now projected to be \$10 billion this year. And if the Asian financial difficulties don't hurt us too much, we will, in fact, balance the budget this year, may even have a small surplus—if not this year, certainly next year. None of that would have happened if, in my opinion, if he hadn't been willing to stand up and take a strong position,

because everybody knew that there was not another Member of Congress that had as much at risk as he did. And he did it anyway because it was the right thing to do.

And 15 million jobs later, we have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history. I don't think it would have happened if we hadn't brought the deficit down beginning in 1992.

Now, let me make one last point about Senator Hollings. It's true that I was 2 years old when he first got elected. *[Laughter]* But I was having to pay the adult ticket price at the movies when he got elected Governor in 1958, because I was 12. *[Laughter]* But he is a very young person. Peatsy is a very young person. They make you happy to be around them because they're always full of life and always thinking about tomorrow.

What really—sometimes, younger people in our business are at a disadvantage because, sometimes, they're thinking a little bit too much about today and a little bit too little about tomorrow. And I think all of us would admit that as we've grown older in life, as long as we have our health and our mind is working well and we are engaged, the older we get, as long as we're functioning properly, the more likely we are to be thinking further into the future, the more likely we are to be concerned about grandchildren as well as our children.

And if you think about the time in which we live and the speed with which things are changing—not least in the telecommunications business, which, has a lot of representatives here, and I thank them all for being here—this is a time when we need someone who is not only smart and active but someone who is literally capable of thinking about the long-run interests of the country. Fritz Hollings wanted to save Social Security when most people didn't know it was in danger. Now it's become part of the mantra of official Washington. I'd like to say I thought of it first, but I didn't. He was preaching to me about it for 3 years before I ever made the first speech about it.

And I think that this is a time when—if you think about the kinds of questions we have to face here, the speed with which things are changing, the complexity of the

problem, and the way we are likely to totally reshape the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world in the next decade, it is probably more important that he be elected this time than in any of the previous elections in which he has run.

I hope the people of South Carolina, like people of my native State and the whole South who have been leaving the Democrats in droves, will see a better economy, a lower crime rate, the lowest welfare roles in 27 years, the lowest crime rate in 24 years, a people coming together instead of being driven apart, and think, you know, maybe old Fritz was right all along.

He was, and he's right for the future, too. And I thank you for being here for him.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Rita L. (Peatsy) Hollings, wife of Senator Hollings; and Esther Coopersmith, dinner host, and her daughter, Connie.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

March 12, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you, Steve, and thank you all for being here. I would just like to briefly make a few points. I've seen almost everybody around this table in the last few weeks, and I wouldn't think of putting you through another speech. [*Laughter*] But I would like to say a couple of things.

First of all, I want to thank you for your extraordinary labors on behalf of our party. Second, I want to say that I believe the upcoming 150th anniversary of our party is a great opportunity for us to send a signal to America that we expect to be around for another 150 years by continuing to press our country forward into the future together.

I spent a lot of time in the last few weeks reading about the beginning of the Democratic Party and Andrew Jackson's Presidency and all the things he did right—and one or two things he probably did wrong in the light of history. [*Laughter*] But I have very strong convictions now that are stronger than they were when I came here even, that our party has shed a lot of the baggage that was holding

us back in public perception. We have proved that together we can take the country into the future with a strong economy, a declining crime rate, a mending social fabric, a strong position in the world, and that we have a great obligation at this good time for our country to bear down and press forward. And I hope we can all do that around the 150th celebration.

Steve mentioned the victory of Lois Capps in California in the remarkable special election for Congress. Let me say it was a truly remarkable victory because I think that that seat, which was previously occupied by her husband, was one of only three Democratic seats in the country where Al Gore and I did not win in '96. I think we lost by a point because of the Ralph Nader vote, but nonetheless, we didn't quite win it.

The overwhelming lion's share of credit goes to Lois Capps, who is a remarkable person. Many of you know that her daughter, Laura, works for me and has for some time. A lot of the credit goes to the feelings that the voters in that district have about her late husband, Walter, who was also an astonishing human being. But I think that she ran the race in the way that I think that the Democrats ought to run their races. She ran a grass-roots campaign, a local campaign. She did not ask for it, nor seek any outside politician to come in and tell the people of her district how to vote.

In so doing, she did exactly what I did when I was Governor of my State. For nearly 12 years, I felt the same way. But she embraced the issues that were reflected in my State of the Union Address and that our party is advancing this year. And she was able to do it because that's what she heard people talking to her about. In political terms in the way people write about these races up here, perhaps one of the most significant things is that she was able to win with a torrent of so-called independent third party expenditures against her on any number of issues. But she did it with old-fashioned grassroots campaigning, common sense, a great heart, and a real fidelity to the kinds of issues that I think we have to continue to press, including the Patient's Bill of Rights, the whole

range of educational issues, and the resolution of the tobacco litigation in a way that helps to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco.

It was a very impressive campaign. It is a mark, if you will, of the future of what we could do all over the country this year. But if we want to do it, we have to do what she did. We have to have good candidates. They have to be closely tied to the people. They have to be interested in grassroots work and not ashamed to get out there and really hustle and listen to people and work with them. They don't have to have more money than their opponents, but they have to have enough money to have their message heard and to answer whatever onslaught is put against them. And if we do that, I believe we have a good chance to win, because I think the tide of public opinion is moving our way because of the level of confidence people have in our country and where we are, and the sense that they have, notwithstanding that confidence, that we have great challenges to face and we need to embrace them.

So I feel wonderful about this race, both personally because Hillary and I care so much for Laura, Lois's daughter, and because I cared so much about her husband as well as our new Congresswoman from California. But I think it bodes well for the Democrats if we are prepared to realize that politics is not about what has been said and done in Washington, politics is about what is said and done and felt passionately in the neighborhoods of this country.

Finally, let me say that this is an interesting time for me. We are trying to—and for our country now—we are trying very hard to work out an agreement that would pass comprehensive tobacco legislation. I know you're all seeing the press reports of it. There are obstacles. There are differences, but I think we've got a good chance to pass it. And there are only 68 days left, work days left in this session of Congress. And that doesn't sound like a lot of time, and it isn't. But I think it would be unbelievable neglect for the Congress to leave this year without passing that tobacco legislation.

A thousand children a day have their lives shortened because, illegally, they began to

smoke in response to advertising campaigns and other inducements—1,000 a day. That's too high a price to pay to fool around and wait until next year just because this is an election year and people have other things to do. So that's the first thing I wanted to say; we're working on that.

Secondly, I am about to leave on a trip for Africa, and I'm going to countries that no sitting President has ever visited before. No President's ever made a serious trip to Africa. And I think it is very important for our economy, very important for our foreign policy, very important for our efforts to protect the global environment and to deal with the spread of disease and other major global issues we'll all be facing together. We can build a great partnership there. I'm excited about that.

When I get back, I then have to go on a long-planned trip to South America to the second Summit of the Americas. We had the first one in Miami 4 years ago, and we are looking forward to continuing to work in our hemisphere. Every country but one is a democracy. Our fastest growing trading partners are our neighbors in our hemisphere. And the fact that the United States has reached out and tried to build economic and other partnerships with these good people who share our part of the globe is an important thing.

I'm then going in May to meet with the other leaders of the largest seven economies, and our political partnership with Russia, in England. And then I just announced that I have moved up my trip to China for late June because of the strong recommendations of our people and the progress we're making in working with the Chinese on a whole range of subjects. And obviously, the welfare of the American people in the 21st century will be shaped in large measure by the partnerships we have with the largest country in the world.

So this is a good time. We're working; we're doing remarkably well as a country. But I want to say, as I say every time, the Democratic Party is not the party of self-congratulation; it is the party of forward motion. We have no business engaging in self-congratulation except to cite it to the voters as evidence

that we can be trusted to do more, even better, if we're given the chance to do it. We should be worried about the future; that's what elections are about. We should be grateful for the conditions that exist today. We should recognize there are a whole range of challenges out there, and we should be intensely focused on meeting them. Because of your help, that's exactly what we're going to be able to do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. in the Balcony Room at the Sheraton Luxury Collection. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Chuan Likphai of Thailand and an Exchange With Reporters

March 13, 1998

President Clinton. Let me just begin by welcoming Prime Minister Chuan here to the United States. We have had a remarkable friendship with Thailand over a long period of time. It is our oldest security alliance in the region. We have, obviously, been very concerned about the challenges facing the Thai economy but very, very impressed with the leadership of this Prime Minister—his willingness to make difficult decisions to bring his country back to a full and robust financial health. And we want to do whatever we can to be a good friend and a good partner, because we have confidence in the Prime Minister's leadership and because we value our partnership with Thailand.

We welcome you here, sir.

Q. What are you going to do?

President Clinton. Would you like to say anything?

Prime Minister Chuan. I thank President Clinton for inviting me and the Thai delegation to visit the United States. Thailand and the United States have enjoyed a long history of relations for the past 165 years. My visit is aimed to reaffirm and underline the friendship that exists between the Thai and American people and between our two countries.

Thailand is undergoing a period of financial and economic crisis. During this time of

need, we appreciate the help and support of our friends. We, the Thai people, will do whatever we can to overcome our crisis, and we are confident that we will be able to regain economic stability and be a force that can contribute to world peace and progress.

The people of Thailand wish to thank President Clinton for the concern that he has displayed for the crisis in Thailand, the concern that he has displayed for the situation in Southeast Asia. We thank him for his sincere engagement in that region.

President Clinton. To answer your question, I will make an announcement later today. But I think in fairness, the Prime Minister and I should have a chance to speak first because we haven't discussed it, and I want to have a chance to hear from him on any ideas he has. But we will have one or two things to say later in the day after we've had a chance to visit.

Asian Economies

Q. Mr. President, is the worst of the Asian financial crisis now behind us?

President Clinton. Well, I hope so, but it's hard to say. I think what we're beginning to see is a differentiation on the part of the markets in dealing with these different countries. And that's what, first and foremost, I would like to see; that is, we don't want to see the whole region thrown into a long-term recession because of a perception that everything is the same everywhere. I think that what we want is at least to get the investors where they're making individual judgments about nations and about particular investments within nations and then get everybody on a path to recovery and reform.

We've worked hard with Indonesia, with South Korea, with Thailand. We want to support the efforts of the IMF and others in Malaysia, the Philippines, all these countries that have had either a temporary or longer term difficulties. So I hope the worst is over, but I think that every leader is going to have to do what this Prime Minister has done, which is to try to follow a rigorous path that will build confidence in the investment community, get the flows going back into the country of the money necessary to get business going and strengthen the lives of ordinary people.

President's Visits to Russia and China

Q. Are you going to China and Russia this spring? Have you moved up a travel schedule?

President Clinton. I do not have a definite schedule for Russia. Prime Minister Yeltsin—I mean, President Yeltsin and I agreed a long time ago, probably a year or so ago, that I would come to him for the next visit, but that it would occur after the Russian Duma ratified START II so that we could begin to work on START III and really get the—take the next big step in lowering the nuclear weapons arsenals of both countries.

Q. They haven't done that?

President Clinton. Not yet. That's something that I talked to Prime Minister Chernomyrdin about when he was here, and the Vice President did. If the Russian Duma should decide to do that, then I would attempt to respond, as I promised President Yeltsin over a year ago I would.

Now, on the China issue, let me explain why this trip was moved up. Ambassador Sasser and other advisers of mine have been arguing for months, literally for months, that I should move up the trip to China. Because we had such a successful summit here with President Jiang, a lot got done. Much has happened since then. I felt that, after listening to them, that they were probably right, that even though we had a lot of trips this year, so we tried to space them out, that our relationship with China is so important that we needed to try to build on it and make some more progress.

Now, just yesterday, the Chinese announced their intention to sign the Covenant on Political and Civil Rights. This is a very significant step forward in our attempts to work within to establish rational legal systems and to elevate the cause of democracy and human rights. So I was very pleased by that. And I expect that they will sign it soon. So we will continue to work on that, and we're trying to work out the details of the trip now.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Sir, what about Belfast?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, we're about to celebrate St. Patrick's Day here, and we expect that many of the major

players in the Irish peace process will be here. I will do my best to see them all. I am—I've been very involved in this from the beginning. I think that the next 60 to 90 days are very, very important, and we have to do everything we can to try to get the parties together to move in a timely fashion.

Whether I would go to Belfast or not when I'm going to—more or less around the time I'll be in England for the G-8 meeting would depend upon what the posture of things is then with the peace process and, after consultation with Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern, whether I could make any kind of constructive contribution.

There's been absolutely no decision and hardly any discussion of that. I am far more—that's a very premature thing. The more important thing is when the parties are here next week, can the United States play a positive role in trying to push the Irish peace process forward? It's a very—that's a very important thing and, in a way, much bigger in terms of its potential impact than a question of an Irish trip.

China

Q. Are you confident that China is living up to the nuclear agreement?

President Clinton. You're referring, I think, to the story in the paper this morning. Let me say that when I made the agreement with President Jiang, sometime after that information came to us that indicated that there was a low-level discussion—not a high-level one in the Chinese Government, a low-level discussion—about the possibility of some transfers which would have been inconsistent with that agreement. We followed through on it. The Chinese followed through on it and kept their agreement to the letter.

So I think that the revelation in the paper this morning is further support for the proposition that we should be engaged with China. The Prime Minister and other Asian leaders who are friends with the United States have urged us to build a stronger, constructive partnership with China. And so I'm well pleased, actually, with the way that issue can out.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Sir, do you think the Patient's Bill of Rights is going to pass, sir?

President Clinton. Do I believe it will?

Q. Do you believe the Patient's Bill of Rights will pass, given that you're to receive the report of the quality care commission today?

President Clinton. I do. I hope it will pass this year, and I think there are relatively few differences. The difference between the business and the insurance community on the one hand, and the medical and patient community on the other, about many things, but there's, you know, there's some discussion about the litigation issues and all that. We have to resolve some of the differences. I have been impressed with the number of Republicans who have agreed with what I think is an almost unanimous position of the Democratic Caucus in the House, and I think there's a similar sense in the Senate that it is urgent that we do something on this.

So I'm hopeful that we can do it this year. If we—I'm hopeful that that will happen. I hope we get the tobacco settlement. Obviously, I'd like it if my entire legislative program could be adopted this year, as well as some of their ideas, but at a minimum we shouldn't leave without dealing with the tobacco issue.

Q. Are you going to keep Congress in until it passes, sir?

President Clinton. Well, I would certainly consider that. I don't think they should leave without resolving the tobacco thing. You know, passing over from one year to the next is understandable in a measure of this size and magnitude, but we're talking about 1,000 children a day who are going to have their lives shortened. You can't justify taking another whole year to deal with this. The issues are somewhat complicated, but they're not that difficult, and they ought to be dealt with this year.

Q. Once the Paula Jones case is resolved—

NCAA Basketball Tournament

Q. Did you see the tournament?

President Clinton. It's a great tournament. It's the most interesting tournament we've had in some time, really.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia; President Jiang Zemin of China; James M. Sasser, U.S. Ambassador to China; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing the Memorandum on Establishment of the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force

March 13, 1998

Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, thank you for your work on this issue and your interest in it. I thank Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman, Secretary West, the members of the White House staff who worked on this. But especially let me thank the members of the Commission and the Executive Director of the Commission, Janet Corrigan. They have done a remarkable citizen service for the people of the United States of America, and we're all very grateful to them.

As we approach a new century with all its stunning advances in science and technology, we know that many of them will come in medicine and health. We must act now to spread these breakthroughs and improve the quality of health care for every American. I accept the Commission's report. I endorse your recommendations.

For 5 years we have worked to expand access to quality health care for the American people, step by step: health insurance coverage for people who move between jobs; expanded health care coverage for millions of children; strengthened Medicare with more preventive benefits. Last year, as the Vice President said, this Commission recommended a Patient's Bill of Rights. Last month I acted to ensure by Executive order that one-third of all Americans—those in Medicare, Medicaid, veterans health care systems and other Federal plans—enjoy the benefits of this Patient's Bill of Rights. Now these protections must be extended to all Americans. And in the remaining 68 days of this congressional session, Congress must

take the next step and make the Patient's Bill of Rights the law of the land.

Now, as you have told America in this report, we must also seize this moment of opportunity to improve the quality of health care for all our people. For all its strengths, our health care system still is plagued by avoidable errors, overused and underused procedures and gaps in the quality of care. For example, when hundreds of thousands of Americans are needlessly injured while in the hospital, when 18,000 Americans die of heart attacks that did not have to be fatal, when 80,000 women undergo unnecessary hysterectomies every year, surely we can do better.

This Commission has drawn a road map for higher quality across American health care. Above all, our Nation must develop uniform national standards so that health plans can compete on quality, not just cost and so that health care consumers can judge for themselves. This is the best way to assure quality health care for all Americans.

We can take three steps to advance these high health care standards. First, health care quality standards should be set at a forum bringing together providers, business and labor, consumers, insurers, and Government. I've asked the Vice President to convene this health care quality forum this June.

Second, I'm ordering Federal agencies to create a task force to find ways to improve quality in the health care systems that we operate. The Federal Government must lead the way in lifting health care quality for all our people.

Third, I support this Commission's recommendation to create a permanent Health Care Quality Council to set new goals and track our progress in meeting those goals. A council should be established by any health care quality legislation enacted this year.

We can make this year a time of real achievement in our mission to improve health care for every American. The American health care system has been the best in the world in the 20th century. If we press forward with medical research, enact a Patient's Bill of Rights, insist on high quality everywhere in America, continue to expand quality affordable coverage, protect and preserve Medicare and Medicaid, we can make

American health care the best in the world in the 21st century.

Now I intend to sign an Executive order to all the relevant agencies to make sure they work together to develop the standards you recommend for quality health care, first for those whom we reach, and hopefully as a model for all Americans.

Again, I thank this Commission. I ask the people and the members of the press here present to remember just the single instances I cited from the Commission's report of examples where we still have serious quality challenges. And I ask you all to rededicate yourself to this purpose on this day.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Janet Corrigan, Executive Director, President's Advisory Commission on Quality and Consumer Protection in the Health Care Industry.

Memorandum on the Establishment of the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force

March 13, 1998

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management

Subject: Establishment of the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force

Last November, I endorsed the "Patient Bill of Rights" recommended by the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry (the "Quality Commission"). On February 20, 1998, after receiving your encouraging reports from the Vice President about the degree to which your agencies are in compliance with these rights, I directed you to take all administrative actions under your authority to come into compliance.

As a result of my February 20 memorandum and your commitment to implement the Patient Bill of Rights, the Federal Government will be taking the lead in ensuring patient protections. By holding the Federal

Government accountable, we are strengthening our call on the Congress to pass patient rights legislation that exceeds these protections to all Americans.

Yesterday, in their report to me through the Vice President, the Quality Commission took the next logical step. Building on the Patient Bill of Rights, which is explicitly designed to ensure quality, the Commission's final report includes recommendations that I am confident will actually improve quality care. Specifically, the Commission called for the development of national health care quality improvement goals and the use of measurement standards that will empower consumers and businesses to make informed purchasing decisions based on health plans' quality performance records.

The Quality Commission recommends establishing "two complementary entities, one public and one private, to provide ongoing national leadership in health care quality improvement." The Commission recommends the creation of a broadly represented, publicly administered "Advisory Council for Health Care Quality" and a privately administered "Forum for Health Care Quality Measurement and Reporting." The Commission's approach represents a creative balance to achieve constructive involvement from all the parties that have important expertise and experience in this area.

It is my strong belief that we must ensure that all relevant agencies within the Federal Government build on their leadership role in health care quality. As the Quality Commission report makes clear, the lack of coordination and uniform quality standards in both the public and private sectors has created conditions that fall "short of fully meeting users' needs, and often are duplicative and unduly burdensome on health care providers, plans, and others." To that end, the Federal Government must use improved standards and goals to better inform and empower health care consumers and purchasers under Federal jurisdiction. Moreover, we must do a better job of collaborating within and across the Federal Government to most efficiently and effectively ensure we achieve the national goal of improving quality and health outcomes.

Therefore, I am directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to immediately establish a "Quality Interagency Coordination" (QuIC) task force to ensure better coordination among the executive agencies with jurisdiction over health programs. I hereby direct you to take the following actions consistent with your authority and the mission of your agency to meet or exceed the recommendations of the Quality Commission.

First, I direct that all participating agencies shall have equal standing on the QuIC task force.

Second, I direct the task force to, wherever feasible, collaborate on goals, models, and timetables that are consistent with the Quality Commission's six "National Aims for Improvement": reducing the underlying causes of illness, injury, and disability; reducing health care errors; ensuring the appropriate use of health care services; expanding research on effectiveness of treatments; addressing oversupply and undersupply of health care resources; and increasing patient participation in their care.

Third, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to serve as the convener of the QuIC task force and to schedule the first task force meeting to order by no later than March 27, 1998.

Fourth, I direct the task force to improve cooperation by the participating agencies on the development and utilization of quality measurement mechanisms for public sector programs; these efforts should be flexible enough to respond to changing needs, technology, and information, while being sufficiently standardized to be comparably measured.

Fifth, I direct the task force to work to increase the development and dissemination of evidence-based health care information to help guide practitioners' actions in ways that will improve quality and potentially constrain costs.

Sixth, I direct the task force to consult with health care workers and their representatives, as well as other affected

parties, in developing models for quality improvement.

Seventh, I direct the task force to enhance efforts to develop user-friendly information for both consumer and business purchasers that facilitates meaningful comparisons of quality performances of plans, facilities, and practitioners.

Eighth, I direct all participating agencies, where feasible and appropriate, to seek to avoid inefficient duplication of ongoing quality improvement efforts and resources.

Finally, I direct the task force, to every extent possible, to endeavor to coordinate the Federal programs' quality reporting and compliance requirements to reduce administrative burdens on private entities who administer, oversee, or participate in the Nation's Federal health programs.

William J. Clinton

Statement on the Decision of Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II Not To Seek Reelection

March 13, 1998

For 12 years in the United States House of Representatives, Joe Kennedy has proven himself to be a dedicated advocate for the Nation's working families. His efforts on behalf of his Massachusetts constituents, as well as underprivileged people across America, will be sorely missed in Washington. As one of the foremost voices in the Congress for low income housing opportunities for needy families, Representative Kennedy worked to expand the availability of credit to working Americans to buy homes and to open businesses.

I know that Representative Kennedy will continue his family's long tradition of public service on behalf of our Nation. I wish him well in all of his future endeavors, and on behalf of the Nation I thank him for his dedicated service.

Executive Order 13078—Increasing Employment of Adults With Disabilities

March 13, 1998

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to increase the employment of adults with disabilities to a rate that is as close as possible to the employment rate of the general adult population and to support the goals articulated in the findings and purpose section of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities.

(a) There is established the "National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities" ("Task Force"). The Task Force shall comprise the Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commissioner of Social Security, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Transportation, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Chairperson of the National Council on Disability, the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and such other senior executive branch officials as may be determined by the Chair of the Task Force.

(b) The Secretary of Labor shall be the Chair of the Task Force; the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall be the Vice Chair of the Task Force.

(c) The purpose of the Task Force is to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population. The Task Force shall develop and recommend to the President, through the Chair of the Task Force, a coordinated Federal policy to reduce employment barriers for persons with disabilities. Policy recommendations may cover such areas as discrimination,

reasonable accommodations, inadequate access to health care, lack of consumer-driven, long-term supports and services, transportation, accessible and integrated housing, telecommunications, assistive technology, community services, child care, education, vocational rehabilitation, training services, job retention, on-the-job supports, and economic incentives to work. Specifically, the Task Force shall:

- (1) analyze the existing programs and policies of Task Force member agencies to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to work faced by people with disabilities;
- (2) develop and recommend options to address health insurance coverage as a barrier to employment for people with disabilities;
- (3) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze State and private disability systems (e.g., workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, private insurance, and State mental health and mental retardation systems) and their effect on Federal programs and employment of adults with disabilities;
- (4) consider statistical and data analysis, cost data, research, and policy studies on public subsidies, employment, employment discrimination, and rates of return-to-work for individuals with disabilities;
- (5) evaluate and, where appropriate, coordinate and collaborate on, research and demonstration priorities of Task Force member agencies related to employment of adults with disabilities;
- (6) evaluate whether Federal studies related to employment and training can, and should, include a statistically significant sample of adults with disabilities;
- (7) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze youth programs related to employment (e.g., Employment and Training Administration programs, special education, vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, vocational education, and Social Security Administration work incentives and other programs, as may be determined by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Force) and the outcomes of those programs for young people with disabilities;
- (8) evaluate whether a single governmental entity or program should be established to provide computer and electronic accommodations for Federal employees with disabilities;
- (9) consult with the President's Committee on Mental Retardation on policies to increase the employment of people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities; and
- (10) recommend to the President any additional steps that can be taken to advance the employment of adults with disabilities, including legislative proposals, regulatory changes, and program and budget initiatives.

(d)(1) The members of the Task Force shall make the activities and initiatives set forth in this order a high priority within their respective agencies within the levels provided in the President's budget.

(2) The Task Force shall issue its first report to the President by November 15, 1998. The Task Force shall issue a report to the President on November 15, 1999, November 15, 2000, and a final report on July 26, 2002, the 10th anniversary of the initial implementation of the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The reports shall describe the actions taken by, and progress of, each member of the Task Force in carrying out this order. The Task Force shall terminate 30 days after submitting its final report.

(e) As used herein, an adult with a disability is a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity.

Sec. 2. Specific activities by Task Force members and other agencies.

(a) To ensure that the Federal Government is a model employer of adults with disabilities, by November 15, 1998, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall submit to the Task Force a review of Federal Government

personnel laws, regulations, and policies and, as appropriate, shall recommend or implement changes necessary to improve Federal employment policy for adults with disabilities. This review shall include personnel practices and actions such as: hiring, promotion, benefits, retirement, workers' compensation, retention, accessible facilities, job accommodations, layoffs, and reductions in force.

(b) The Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work with the States and others to ensure that the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act is carried out in accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, so that individuals with disabilities and their families can realize the full promise of welfare reform by having an equal opportunity for employment.

(c) The Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, the Small Business Administration, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to develop small business and entrepreneurial opportunities for adults with disabilities and strategies for assisting low-income adults, including those with disabilities to create small businesses and micro-enterprises. These same agencies, in consultation with the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, shall assess the impact of the Randolph-Sheppard Act vending program and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act on employment and small business opportunities for people with disabilities.

(d) The Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their examination of their programs to see if they can be used to create new work incentives and to remove barriers to work for adults with disabilities.

(e) The Departments of Justice, Education, and Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Social Security Administration shall work together and

report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to propose remedies to the prevention of people with disabilities from successfully exercising their employment rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 because of the receipt of monetary benefits based on their disability and lack of gainful employment.

(f) The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor and the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce, in cooperation with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, the National Council on Disability, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall design and implement a statistically reliable and accurate method to measure the employment rate of adults with more disabilities as soon as possible, but not later than the date of termination of the Task Force. Data derived from this methodology shall be published on as frequent a basis as possible.

(g) All executive agencies that are not members of the Task Force shall: (1) coordinate and cooperate with the Task Force; and (2) review their programs and policies to ensure that they are being conducted and delivered in a manner that facilitates and promotes the employment of adults with disabilities. Each agency shall file a report with the Task Force on the results of its review on November 15, 1998.

Sec. 3. Cooperation. All efforts taken by executive departments and agencies under sections 1 and 2 of this order shall, as appropriate, further partnerships and cooperation with public and private sector employers, organizations that represent people with disabilities, organized labor, veteran service organizations, and State and local governments, whenever such partnerships and cooperation are possible and would promote the employment and gainful economic activities of individuals with disabilities.

Sec. 4. Judicial Review. This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party

against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 13, 1998

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 17, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 18.

Memorandum on a Military Drawdown for Jordan

March 13, 1998

Presidential Determination No. 98-19

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Military Drawdown for Jordan

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the laws and Constitution of the United States, including Title III (Military Assistance) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1998 (Public Law 105-118) ("Title III"), I hereby direct the drawdown of defense articles from the stocks of the Department of Defense, defense services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training of an aggregate value of \$25,000,000 under the authority of the fifth proviso under the heading "Foreign Military Financing Program" in Title III for Jordan for the purposes of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest an-

nounced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 7

The President and Hillary Clinton went to Camp David, MD.

March 9

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton hosted a Millennium Evening event in the East Room, which was taped for later broadcast on WETA's "In Performance at the White House" series.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on March 7.

March 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Bridgeport, CT, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Westport, CT.

Later, the President traveled to Cincinnati, OH, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alice Rae Yelen to serve as a member of the National Museum Services Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas Ehrlich and Dorothy A. Johnson to serve as members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to appoint Milton M. Irvin as Chair and member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

March 11

In the afternoon, the President met with Chairman of the Government Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mahlon (Sandy) Apgar IV to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Logistics, and Environment at the Department of Defense.

The President named Todd Stern to coordinate the administration's efforts on climate change, as Assistant to the President for Special Projects.

The President named Phillip Caplan as Assistant to the President and Staff Secretary.

The President announced his intention to nominate James K. Robinson to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, on March 18 and will return to Washington, DC, late the same evening.

The White House announced that the President will visit Rwanda while he is in Africa March 22–April 2.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning March 7.

March 12

The President announced his intention to nominate G. Edward DeSeve to serve as Deputy Director for Management in the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to nominate Vivian Lowery Derryck to serve as Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

March 13

In the afternoon, the President met with Rev. Jesse Jackson in the Oval Office.

Later, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Camp David, MD.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 10

Shirley Elizabeth Barnes, of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Madagascar.

Charles R. Stith, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Republic of Tanzania.

William Lacy Swing, of North Carolina, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Withdrawn March 10

Tracy D. Conwell, of Texas, to be a member of the National Museum Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2001, which was sent to the Senate on February 11, 1997.

Submitted March 11

Thomas Ehrlich, of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term of 5 years.

Dorothy A. Johnson, of Michigan, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term of 5 years, vice Walter H. Shorenstein, term expired.

Stephen C. Robinson, of Connecticut, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut for the term of 4 years, vice Christopher Droney, resigned.

Alice Rae Yelen, of Louisiana, to be a member of the National Museum Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2001, vice Fay S. Howell, term expired.

Withdrawn March 11

Ida L. Castro, of New York, to be Director of the Women's Bureau, Department of Labor, which was sent to the Senate on October 9, 1997.

Submitted March 13

Mahlon Apgar IV,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of
the Army, vice Robert M. Walker.

Vivian Lowery Derryck,
of Ohio, to be an Assistant Administrator of
the Agency for International Development,
vice John F. Hicks, Sr.

G. Edward DeSeve,
of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Director for
Management, Office of Management and
Budget, vice John A. Koskinen.

James K. Robinson,
of Michigan, to be an Assistant Attorney
General, vice Jo Ann Harris, resigned.

Withdrawn March 13

Jane G. Gould,
of New York, to be Deputy Commissioner
of Social Security for the term expiring Janu-
ary 19, 2001, which was sent to the Senate
on September 2, 1997.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released March 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy As-
sistant to the President for Health Policy
Chris Jennings and Deputy Assistant to the
President for Domestic Policy Elena Kagan
on the Patient Bill of Rights and tobacco leg-
islation

Announcement of the nomination for U.S.
District Judge for the District of Connecticut

Released March 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Mike McCurry

Statement by the Press Secretary: Jackson-
Vanik Waiver for Vietnam

Statement by the Press Secretary: Addition
of Rwanda to the President's Visit to Africa

Released March 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Mike McCurry

Released March 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Africa Schol-
ars Richard Anthony Joseph, Marina
Seassaro Ottaway, and Terrence Lyons on
the President's visit to Africa

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy
Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Assistant
Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific
Affairs Stanley Roth, and Under Secretary of
State for Economic, Business, and Agricul-
tural Affairs Stuart Eizenstat on the Presi-
dent's meeting with Prime Minister Chuan
of Thailand

Fact sheet: U.S.-Thailand Relations

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy
Press Secretary Barry Toiv on the week
ahead and Deputy Assistant to the President
for Health Policy Chris Jennings on the Pa-
tient Bill of Rights

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved March 6¹

S. 927 / Public Law 105-160
National Sea Grant College Program Reau-
thorization Act of 1998

Approved March 9

S. 916 / Public Law 105-161
To designate the United States Post Office
building located at 750 Highway 28 East in

¹ This act was not received in time for inclusion
in the appropriate issue.

Taylorsville, Mississippi, as the “Blaine H. Eaton Post Office Building”

S. 985 / Public Law 105–162

To designate the post office located at 194 Ward Street in Paterson, New Jersey, as the “Larry Doby Post Office”